BUNNY BROWN AND HIS SISTER SUE PLAYING CIRCUS

LAURA LEE HOPE

Ruth Hawley

THEN BUNNY AND SUE JUMPED THROUGH HOOPS COVERED WITH PAPER.

Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue Playing Circus. *Frontispiece* (*P.* 117).

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BY

LAURA LEE HOPE

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THE BUNNY BROWN SERIES, THE BOBBSEY TWINS SERIES, THE OUTDOOR GIRLS SERIES, ETC.

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Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue Playing Circus

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BUNNY BROWN AND HIS SISTER SUE PLAYING CIRCUS

CHAPTER I

BUNNY IS UPSIDE DOWN

"GRANDPA, where are you going now?" asked Bunny Brown.

"And what are you going to do?" asked Bunny Brown's sister Sue.

Grandpa Brown, who was walking down the path at the side of the farmhouse, with a basket on his arm, stood and looked at the two children. He smiled at them, and Bunny and Sue smiled back, for they liked Grandpa Brown very much, and he just loved them.

"Are you going after the eggs?" asked Sue.

"That basket is too big for eggs," Bunny observed.

"It wouldn't be—not for great, great, big eggs," the little girl said. "Would it, Grandpa?"

"No, Sue. I guess if I were going out to gather ostrich eggs I wouldn't get many of them in this basket. But I'm not going after eggs. Not this time, anyhow."

"Where are you going?" asked Bunny once more.

"What's a—a ockstritch?" asked Sue, for that was as n ar as she could say the funny word.

"An ostrich," answered Grandpa Brown, "is a big bird, much bigger than the biggest Thanksgiving turkey. It has long legs, and fine feathers, and ladies wear them on their hats. I mean they wear the ostrich feathers, not the bird's legs."

"And do ockstritches lay big eggs?" Sue wanted to know.

"They do," answered Grandpa Brown. "They lay eggs in the hot sand of the desert, and they are big eggs. I guess I couldn't get more than six of them in this basket."

"Oh-o-o-o!" exclaimed Bunny and Sue together, with their eyes wide open.

"What big eggs they must be!" went on Bunny.

"And is you going to get hens' eggs or ockstritches' eggs now, Grandpa?" asked Sue.

"Neither one, little brown-eyes, I'm going out in the orchard to pick a few peaches. Grandma wants to make a peach shortcake for supper. So I have to get the peaches."

"Oh, may we come?" asked Sue, dropping the doll with which she had been playing.

"I'll help you pick the peaches," offered Bunny, and he put down some sticks, a hammer and nails. He was trying to make a house for Splash, the big dog, but it was harder work than Bunny had thought. He was glad to stop.

"Yes, c me along, both of you," replied Grandpa Brown. "I don't believe you can reach up to pick any peaches, but you can eat some, I guess. You know how to eat peaches, don't you?" he asked, smiling again at Bunny Brown and his sister Sue.

"Oh, I love peaches!" said Sue.

"And I do, too—and peach shortcake is awful good!" murmured Bunny.

"Well, come along then. It's nice and shady and cool in the peach orchard."

Grandpa Brown put the basket over his arm, and gave Bunny one hand to clasp, while Sue took the other. In this way they walked down the path, through the garden, and out toward the orchard.

"Bunny! Sue! Where are you going?" called their mother to the children. Mrs. Brown had come out on the side porch.

"With Grandpa," answered Bunny.

"I'll look after them," said Grandpa Brown.

Bunny and his sister, with their papa and mamma, were spending the summer on the farm of Grandpa Brown away out in the country. The children liked it on the farm very much, for they had good fun. A few days before they had gone to the circus, and had seen so many wonderful things that they talked about them from morning until night, and, sometimes, even after they got to bed.

But just now, for a little while, they were not talking or thinking about the circus, though up to the time when Grandpa Brown came around the house with the basket on his arm, Bunny had been telling Sue about

the man who hung by his heels from a trapeze that was fast to the top of the big tent. A trapeze, you know, is something like a swing, only it has a stick for a seat instead of a board.

"I could hang by a trapeze if I wanted to," Bunny had said to Sue.

"Oh, Bunny Brown! You could not!" Sue had cried.

"I could if I had the trapeze," he had said.

Then along had come Grandpa Brown.

"How many peaches do you think you can eat, Bunny?" asked Grandpa, as he led the children toward the orchard.

"Oh, maybe seven or six."

"That's too many!" laughed Grandpa Brown. "We should have to have the doctor for you, I'm afraid. I guess if you eat two you will have enough, especially with short-cake for supper."

"I can eat three," spoke up Sue. "I like peaches."

"But don't eat too many," said Grandpa. "Now I'll see if I can find a little, low tree, with ripe peaches on it, so you children can pick some off for yourselves.

They were in the orchard now. It was cool and shady there, and the children liked it, for the sun was shining hot outside the orchard. On one edge of the place, where grew the peach trees, ran a little brook, and Bunny and Sue could hear it bubbling as it rippled over the green, mossy stones. The sound of running water made the air seem cooler.

A little farther off, across the garden, were grandpa's beehives, where the bees were making honey. Sue and her brother could hear the bees buzzing as they flew from the hives to the flowers in the field. But the children did not want to go very close to the hives, for they knew the bees could sting.

"Now here's a nice tree for you to pick peaches from," said Grandpa Brown, as he stopped under one in the orchard.

"You may pick two peaches each, and eat them," went on the childrens' grandfather.

"And don't you want us to pick some for you, like ockstritches' eggs, an' put them in the basket?" asked Sue.

"Well, after you eat your two, perhaps you can help me," answered Grandpa Brown

with a smile. But I think he knew that by the time Bunny and Sue had picked their own peaches he would have his basket filled. For, though Bunny and Sue wanted to help, their hands were small and they could not do much. Besides, they liked to play, and you cannot play and work at the same time. But children need to play, so that's all right.

Leaving Bunny and Sue under the tree he had showed them, where they might pick their own peaches, Grandpa Brown walked on a little farther, looking for a place where he might fill his basket.

"Oh, there's a nice red peach I'm going to get!" exclaimed Sue, as she reached up her hand toward it. But she found she was not quite tall enough.

"I'll get it for you," offered Bunny, kindly.

He got the peach for Sue, and she began to eat it.

"Oh, Bunny!" she cried. "It's a lovely sweet one. I hope you get a nice one."

"I will," Bunny said. Then as he looked at his sister he cried: "Oh, Sue! The juice is running all down your chin on your dress."

"Oh-oh-o-o-o!" said Sue, as she looked at the peach juice on her dress. "Oh-o-o-o!"

"Never mind," remarked Bunny. "We can wash it off in the brook."

"Yes," said Sue, and she went on eating her peach. "We'll wash it."

Bunny was looking up into the tree for a peach for himself. He wanted to get the biggest and reddest one he could find.

"Oh, I see a great big one!" Bunny cried, as he walked all around the tree.

"Where is it?" asked Sue. "I want a big one, Bunny."

"I'll get you another one. I see two," and Bunny pointed to them up in the tree.

"You can't reach 'em," asserted Sue. "They're too high, Bunny."

"I—I can climb the tree," said the little boy. "I can climb the tree and g t them."

"You'll fall," Sue said.

"No, I won't, Sue. You just watch me."

The peach tree was a low one, with branches close to the ground. And, as Bunny Brown said, he did know a little bit about climbing. He found a box in the orchard,

and, by standing on this he got up into the tree.

Up and up he went, higher and higher until he was almost within reach of the two peaches he wanted. Grandpa Brown was busy picking peaches at a tree farther off, and did not see the children.

"Look out, Sue. I'm going to drop a peach down to you," called Bunny from up in the tree.

"I'll look out," said Sue. "I'll hold up my dress, and you can drop the peach in that. Then it won't squash on the ground."

She stood under the tree, looking up toward her brother. Bunny reached for one of the two big, red peaches, but he did not pick it. Something else happened.

A branch on which the little boy was standing suddenly broke, and down he fell. He turned over, almost like a clown doing a somersault in the circus, and the next moment Bunny's two feet caught between two other branches, and there he hung, upside down, his head pointing to the ground.

CHAPTER II

LET'S HAVE A CIRCUS!

"BUNNY! Bunny! What are you doing?" cried Sue, as she saw her brother hanging, head down, in such a funny way from the peach tree branches. "Don't do that, Bunny! You'll get hurt!"

"I—I didn't mean to do it!" cried Bunny, and his voice sounded very strange, coming from his mouth upside down as it was. Sue did not know whether to laugh or cry.

"Oh, Bunny! Bunny, is you playing circus?" she asked.

"No—no! I'm not playing circus!" and Bunny wiggled, and wiggled again, trying to get his feet loose. Both of them were caught between two branches of the peach tree where the limbs grew close together.

And it is a good thing that Bunny could not get his feet loose just then, or he would

have wiggled himself to the ground, and he might have been badly hurt, for he would have fallen on his head.

"Oh, Bunny! Bunny! You *is* playing circus!" cried Sue again. She had finished her first peach, and now, dropping the stone, from which she had been sucking the last, sweet bits of pulp, she stood looking at her brother, dangling from the tree.

"No, I'm not playing circus!" and Bunny's voice sounded now as though he was just ready to cry. "Run and tell grandpa to help me down, Sue!" he begged. "I—I'm choking—I can't hardly breathe, Sue! Run for grandpa!"

Bunny was almost choking, and his face, tanned as it was from the sun and wind, was red now—almost as red as the boiled lobster, the hollow claw of which Bunny once put over his nose to make himself look like Mr. Punch, of the Punch and Judy show. For when boys, or girls either, hang by their feet, with their heads upside down, all the blood seems to run there if they hang too long. And that was what was happening to Bunny Brown.

"Are you *sure* you isn't playin' circus?" asked Sue.

"No—I—I'm not playing," answered Bunny. "Hurry for grandpa! Oh, how my head hurts!"

"You look just like the circus man," said Sue. For one of the men in the circus Bunny and Sue had seen a few days before had hung by his toes from a trapeze, upside down, just as Bunny was hanging, with his head pointing toward the ground, and his feet near the top of the tent.

But of course the circus man was used to it, and it did not hurt his head as it did Bunny's.

"Hurry, Sue!" begged the little boy.

"All right. I'll get grandpa," Sue cried, as she ran off toward the tree where Grandpa Brown was picking peaches.

"Oh, Grandpa!" cried the little girl. "Come—come hurry up. Bunny—Bunny—he——"

Sue was so out of breath, from having run so fast, and from trying to talk so fast, that she could hardly speak. But Grandpa Brown knew something was the matter.

"What is it, Sue?" he asked. "What has happened to Bunny? Did a bee sting him?"

"No, Grandpa. But he—he's like the circus man, only he says he isn't playin' he is a circus. He's upside down in the tree, and he's a wigglin' an' a wogglin' an' he can't get down, an' his face is all red an' he wants you, an'—an'——."

"My goodness me!" exclaimed Grandpa Brown, setting on the ground his basket, now half full of peaches. "What is that boy up to now?"

For Bunny Brown, and often his sister Sue, did get into all sorts of mischief, though they did not always mean to do so. "What has Bunny done now, I wonder?" asked grandpa.

"He—he couldn't help it," said Sue. "He slipped when he went up the tree, and now he's swinging by his legs just like the man in the circus, only Bunny says he isn't."

"He isn't what?" asked Grandpa Brown, as he hurried along, taking hold of Sue's hand. "What isn't he, Sue? I never did see such children!" and Grandpa Brown shook his head.

"Bunny says he isn't the man in the circus," explained Sue.

"No, I shouldn't think he would be a man in the circus," said grandpa.

"He *looks* just like a circus man, though," insisted Sue. "But he says he isn't playin' that game."

Sue shook her head. She did not know what it all meant, nor why Bunny was hanging in such a queer way. But Grandpa Brown would make it all right. Sue was sure of that.

"There he is! There's Bunny upside down!" cried Sue, pointing to the tree in which Bunny was hanging by his feet.

"Oh, my!" cried Grandpa Brown. Then he ran forward, took Bunny in his arms, and raised him up. This lifted Bunny's feet free from the tree branches, between which they were caught, and then Grandpa Brown turned the little boy right side up, and set him down on his feet.

"There you are, Bunny!" cried grandpa. "But how did it happen? Were you trying to be a circus, all by yourself?"

"N—n—no," stammered Bunny, for he could hardly get his breath yet. "I—I slipped down when I was reaching for a big, red peach for Sue. But I didn't slip all the way, for my feets caught in the tree."

"Well, it's a good thing they did, or you might have been hurt worse than you were," said Grandpa Brown. "But I guess you're not hurt much now; are you?"

Bunny looked down at his feet. Then he felt of his own arms and legs. He took a long breath. His face was not so red now.

"I—I guess I'm all right," he answered, at last.

"Well, don't climb any more trees," said Grandpa Brown. "You are too little."

Bunny thought he was quite a big boy, but of course grandpa knew what was right.

"I—I won't climb any more *peach* trees," said Bunny Brown.

"No, nor any other kind!" exclaimed his grandfather. "Just keep out of trees. Little boys and girls are safest on the ground. But now you had better come over where I can keep my eyes on you. I have my basket nearly

filled. We'll very soon go back to the house."

Bunny Brown was all right now. So he and Sue went over to the tree where grandpa was picking. They helped to fill the basket, for some of the peaches grew on branches so close to the ground that the children could reach up and pick them without any trouble.

Bunny Brown and his sister Sue had been on grandpa's farm since early summer. Those of you who have read the first book in this series do not need to be told who the children are. But there are some who may want to hear a little about them.

In the first book, named "Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue," I told you how the children, with their father and mother, lived in the town of Bellemere, on Sandport bay, near the ocean. Mr. Brown was in the boat business, and many fishermen hired boats from him.

Aunt Lu came from New York to visit Mrs. Brown, the mother of Bunny and Sue, and while on her visit Aunt Lu lost her diamond ring. Bunny found it in an awfully funny way, when he was playing he was Mr. Punch, in the Punch and Judy show.

In the second book, "Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue on Grandpa's Farm," I told you how the Brown family went to the country in a big automobile, in which they lived just as Gypsies do. They even slept in the big automobile van.

And when Bunny and Sue reached grandpa's farm, after a two days' trip, what fun they had! You may read all about it in the book. And Bunny and Sue did more than just have fun.

The children helped find grandpa's horses, that had been taken away by the Gypsies. The horses were found at the circus, where Bunny and Sue went to see the elephants, tigers, lions, camels and ponies. They also saw the men swinging on the trapeze, high up in the big tent.

Bunny Brown and his sister Sue always wanted to be doing something. If it was not one thing it was another. They often got lost, though they did not mean to. Sometimes their dog Splash would find them.

Splash was a fine dog. He pulled Sue out of the water once, and she called him Splash

because he "splashed" in so bravely to get her.

In Bellemere, where Bunny and Sue lived, they had many friends. Every one in town loved the children. Even Wango, the queer monkey pet of Mr. Winkler, the old sailor, liked Bunny and Sue.

But they had not seen Wango for some time now; not since coming to the farm in the country. They had seen a trained bear, which a man led around by a string. The bear climbed a telegraph pole, and did other tricks. Bunny and Sue thought he was very funny. But they did not like him as much as they did the cunning little monkey at home in Bellemere.

Carrying the basket of peaches on his arm, and leading the children, Grandpa Brown walked back to the house. Mrs. Brown, the mother of Bunny and Sue, watched them come up the walk.

"Oh, Sue!" cried her mother. "Look at your dress! What did you spill on it?"

"I—I guess it's peach juice, Mother. It dripped all over. But Bunny hung upside down in the tree, just like the man in the circus, only he wasn't."

I guess Sue was glad to talk about something else beside the peach juice stains on her dress.

"What—what happened?" asked Mother Brown, looking at grandpa. "Did Bunny——?"

"That's right," he said, laughing. "Bunny was hanging, upside down, in a tree. But he wasn't hurt, and I soon lifted him down."

"Oh, what will those children do next?" asked their mother.

"I—I didn't mean to do it," said Bunny. "It—it just—happened. I—I couldn't help it."

"No, I suppose not," said his mother. "But you must go and wash now. Sue, I'll put a clean dress on you, and then I'll see if I can get the peach stains off this one. You ought to have on an old apron."

A little later, Bunny and Sue, now nice and clean, were sitting on the side porch. It was almost time for supper.

"Bunny," asked Sue, "did it hurt when you were playin' you were a circus man only you weren't?"

"No, it didn't exactly *hurt,*" he said slowly. "But it felt funny. Did I really look like a circus man, Sue?"

"Yep. Just like one. Only, of course, you didn't have any nice pink suit on, with spangles and silver and gold."

"Oh, no, of course not," agreed Bunny. "But did I swing by my feet?"

"Yes, Bunny, you did."

For a moment the little chap said nothing. Then he cried out:

"Oh, Sue! I know what let's do!"

"What?"

"Let's have a circus! It will be lots of fun! We'll get up a circus all by ourselves! Will you help me make a circus?"

CHAPTER III

THE POOR OLD HEN

SUE looked at Bunny with widely-opened eyes. Then she clapped her hands. Sue always did that when she felt happy, and she felt that way now.

"Oh, Bunny!" she cried. "A circus? A real circus?"

"Well, of course not a *real,* big one, with lions and tigers and all that," said the little boy. "We couldn't get elephants and camels and bears. But maybe grandpa would let us take his two horses, that he got back from the Gypsies. They have lots of horses in the circus."

"I'd be afraid to ride on a horse," objected Sue, shaking her head.

"You wouldn't if Bunker Blue held you on; would you?"

"No, maybe not then."

"Well, we'll get Bunker Blue to hold us on the horse's back," said Bunny.

Bunker Blue was a big, red-haired boy—almost a man—and he worked for Mr. Brown. Bunker was very fond of Bunny and Sue. Bunker had steered the big automobile in which the Brown family came to grandpa's farm, and he was still staying in the country.

"Do you think we could really get up a circus?" asked Sue, after thinking about what Bunny had said.

"Of course we can," answered the little boy. "Didn't we get up a Punch and Judy show, when I found Aunt Lu's diamond ring?"

"Yes, but that wasn't as big as a circus."

"Well, we need only have a little circus show, Sue."

"Where could we have it, Bunny?"

The little boy thought for a moment.

"In grandpa's barn," he answered. "There's lots of room. It would be just fine."

"Would you and me be all the circus, Bunny?"

"Oh, no. We'd get some of the other boys and girls. We could get Tom White, Nellie

Bruce, Jimmie Kenny, Sallie Smith and Ned Johnson. They'd be glad to play circus."

"Yes, I guess they would," said Sue. "It will be lots of fun. But what can we do, Bunny? You haven't any lobster claw to play Mr. Punch now, 'cause it's broke."

"No, we don't want to give a Punch and Judy show, Sue. We want to make this just like a circus, with trapezes and wild animals and——"

"But you said we couldn't have any lions or tigers, Bunny. 'Sides, I'd be afraid of them," and Sue looked over her shoulder as if, even then, an elephant might be reaching out his trunk toward her for some peanuts.

"Oh, of course we couldn't have any real wild animals," said Bunny.

"What kind, then?" Sue wanted to know.

"Make believe kind. I could put some stripes on Splash, and make believe our dog was a tiger, Sue."

"How could you put stripes on him, Bunny?"

"With paint."

"No!" cried Sue, shaking her head. "Splash

is half my dog, and I don't want him all painted up. You sha'n't do it, Bunny Brown!"

"All right, then. I'll only paint *my* half of Splash," said the little boy. "*My* half can be a striped tiger, and *your* half can be just a plain dog."

"That would be a funny wild animal," Sue said. "A half tiger and half dog."

"Lots of folks would like to see an animal like that," Bunny said. "I'll just stripe my half of Splash, and leave your half plain, Sue."

"All right. But is you only going to have one wild make-believe animal, Bunny?"

"No, Ned Johnson has a dog. "We can make a lion out of him."

"But Ned's dog hasn't any tail," said Sue. "I mean he has only a little baby tail, like a rabbit. Lions always have tails with tassels on the end."

"Well," said Bunny, slowly. "We could make believe this lion had his tail bit off by an elephant."

"Oh, yes," said Sue.

"Or else maybe I could tie a cloth tail on Ned's dog," went on Bunny.

"And lions have manes, too. That's a lot of hair on their neck, like a horse," went on Sue.

"Well, we could take some carpenter shavings and tie them on Ned's dog's neck," said Bunny. "We could make believe that was the lion's mane."

"Yes," agreed Sue, "we could do that. Oh, I think a circus is nice, Bunny. But what else can we have besides the wild animals?"

"Oh, I can make a trapeze from the clothesline and a broom handle. I could hang by my feet from the trapeze."

"Oh, Bunny! Wouldn't you be afraid?"

"Pooh! No! Didn't I hang in the tree? And I was only a little scared then. I'll get on the trapeze all right."

"And what can I do, Bunny?"

"Oh, you can ride a horse when Bunker Blue holds you on. We'll get mother to make you a blue dress out of mosquito netting, and you can have a ribbon in your hair, like a real circus lady."

"Oh, Bunny, do you s'pose mother will let us have the circus?"

"I guess so. We'll tell her about it, anyhow. But we'll have to get some other boys and girls to help us. And we'll have to make a cage to keep Splash in. He's going to be the wild tiger, you know."

"Oh, but I don't want Splash shut up in a cage!" cried Sue. "I sha'n't let you put my half of him in a cage! And I do own half of him, right down the middle; half his tail is mine, too. You can't put my half of him in any old cage!"

Bunny did not know what to say. It was easy enough to put make-believe tiger stripes on one side, or on half a dog, but it was very hard to put half a dog in a cage, and leave the other half outside. Bunny did not see how it could be done.

"Oh, it won't hurt Splash," said the little boy. "Come on, Sue. Please let me put your half with my half of Splash in a cage."

"No, sir! Bunny Brown! I won't do it! You can't put my half of Splash in a cage. He won't like it."

"But, Sue, it's only a make-believe cage, just as he's a make-believe tiger."

"Oh, well, if it's only a make-believe cage, then, I don't care. But you mustn't hurt him, and you can't put any paint stripes on my half."

"No, I won't, Sue. Now let's go out to the barn and look to see where we can put up the trapezes and rings and things like that, and where I can hang by my feet and by my hands."

"Oh, Bunny! Are you going to do that?"

"Sure!" cried the little boy, as though it was as easy as eating a piece of strawberry short-cake. "You just watch me, Sue."

"Well, I don't want to do that," said Sue. "I'm just going to be a pretty lady and ride a white horse."

"But grandpa hasn't any white horses, Sue. They're brown."

"Well, I can sprinkle some talcum powder on a brown horse and make him white," said the little girl. "Can't I?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Bunny. "That will be fine! But it will take an awful lot of talcum powder to make a big horse all white, Sue."

"Well, I'll just make him spotted white then. I've got some talcum powder of my

own, and it smells awful good. I guess a horse would like it; don't you, Bunny?"

"I guess so, Sue. But come out to the barn."

Grandpa Brown had two barns on his farm. One was where the horses and cows were kept, and the other held wagons, carriages and machinery. It was in the horse-barn where the children went—the barn where there were big piles of sweet-smelling hay.

"I can fall on the hay, 'stead of falling in a net, like the circus men do," said Bunny.

"Anyhow, we haven't any circus net," suggested Sue.

"No," agreed Bunny. "But the hay is just as bouncy. I'm going to jump in it!"

He climbed up on the edge of the hay-mow, or place where the hay is kept, and jumped into the dried grass. For hay is just dried grass, you know.

Down into the hay bounced Bunny, and Sue bounced after him. The children jumped up and down in the hay, laughing and shouting. Then they played around the barn, trying to pretend that they were already having the circus in it.

"Oh, it will be such fun!" cried Sue.

"Jolly!" cried Bunny.

"Let's go and ask mother now," said Sue.

The children started for the house. On the way they had to pass a little pond of water. On the edge of it stood a hen, clucking and making a great fuss. She would run toward the water and then come back again, without getting her feet wet.

"Oh, the poor old hen!" cried Sue. "What's the matter? Oh, see, Bunny! All her little chickens are in the water. Oh, Bunny! We must get them out for her. Oh, you poor old hen!"

CHAPTER IV

A STRANGE BOY

BUNNY BROWN and his sister Sue stood on the shore of the little pond, looking at the old hen, who was fluttering up and down, very much excited, clucking and calling as loudly as she could.

And, paddling up and down in the water in front of her, where the hen dared not go, for chicken's don't like to get wet you know, paddling up and down in front of the hen were some soft, fluffy little balls of downy feathers.

"Oh, her chickens will all be drowned!" cried Sue. "We must get them out, Bunny. Take off your shoes and stockings and wade in. I'll help you save the little chickens for the poor old hen."

Sue sat down on the ground, and began to take off her shoes.

Bunny began to laugh.

"Why, what—what's the matter?" asked Sue, and she seemed rather surprised at Bunny's laughter. "Don't you want to save the little chicks for the hen?" Sue went on. "Maybe somebody threw them in the water, or maybe they fell in."

"Those aren't little chickens, Sue!" exclaimed Bunny, still laughing.

"Not chickens? They aren't? Then what are they?"

"Little ducks! That's the reason they went into the water. They know how to swim when they're just hatched out of the eggs. They won't get drowned."

Sue did not know what to say. She had never before seen any baby ducks, and, at first, they did look like newly hatched chickens. But as she watched them she saw they were swimming about, and, as one little baby duck waddled out on the shore, Sue could see the webbed feet, which were not at all like the claws of a chicken.

"But Bunny—Bunny—if they're little ducks and it doesn't hurt them to go in the water, what makes the old hen so afraid?" Sue asked.

"I—I guess she thinks they are chickens. She doesn't know they are ducks and can swim," said Bunny. "I guess that's it, Sue."

"Ha! Ha! Yes, that's it!" a voice exclaimed behind Bunny and Sue. They looked around to see their Grandpa Brown looking at them and laughing.

"The old hen doesn't know what to make of her little family going in swimming," he went on. "You see, we put ducks' eggs under a hen to hatch, Bunny and Sue. A hen can hatch any kind of eggs."

"Can a hen hatch ockstritches' eggs?" Sue wanted to know.

"Well, maybe not the eggs of an ostrich," answered Grandpa Brown. "I guess a hen could only cover one of those at a time. But a hen can hatch ducks' or turkeys' eggs as well as her own kind."

"So as we don't always have a duck that wants to hatch out little ones, we put the ducks' eggs under a hen. And every time, as soon as the little ducks find water, after they are hatched, they go in for a swim, just as if they had a duck for a mother instead of a hen.

"And, of course, the mother hen thinks she has little chickens, for at first she can't tell the little ducks from chickens. And when they go into the water she thinks, just as you did, Sue, that they will be drowned. So she makes a great fuss. But she soon gets over it."

"I guess she's over it now," said Bunny.

Indeed, the old mother hen was not clucking so loudly now, nor was she rushing up and down on the shore of the pond with her wings all fluffed up. She seemed to know that the little family she had hatched out, even if they were not like any others she had taken care of, were all right, and very nice. And she seemed to think that for them to go in the water was all right, too.

As for the little ducklings, they paddled about, and quacked and whistled (as baby ducks always do) and had a perfectly lovely time. The old mother hen stood on the bank and watched them.

Pretty soon the ducks had had enough of swimming, and they came out on dry land, waddling from side to side in the funny way ducks do when they walk.

"Oh! How glad the old hen is to see them safe on shore again!" cried Sue.

And, indeed, the mother hen did seem glad to have her family with her once more. She clucked over them, and tried to hover them under her warm wings, thinking, maybe, that she would dry them after their bath.

But ducks' feathers do not get wet in the water the way the feathers of chickens do, for ducks feathers have a sort of oil in them. So the little ducks did not need to get dry. They ran about in the sun, quacking in their baby voices, and the mother hen followed them about, clucking and scratching in the gravel to dig up things for them to eat.

"They'll be all right now," said Grandpa Brown. "The next time the little ducks go into the water the old hen mother won't be at all frightened, for she will know it is all right. This always happens when we let a chicken hatch out ducks' eggs."

"And I thought the little chickens were drowning!" laughed Sue, as she put on her shoes again.

"Well, that's just what the mother hen

thought," said Grandpa Brown. "But what have you children been doing?"

"Getting ready for a circus," answered Bunny Brown.

"A circus!" exclaimed grandpa, in surprise.

"Yes," explained Sue. "Bunny is going to get a trapeze, and fall down in the hay, where it doesn't hurt. And he's going to paint his half of our dog Splash, so Splash will look like a tiger, and we're going to have a horse, and Bunker Blue is going to hold me on so I can ride and—and——"

But that was all Sue could think of just then.

Grandpa Brown looked surprised and, taking off his straw hat, scratched his head, as he always did when thinking.

"Going to have a circus; eh? Well, where abouts?"

"In your barn," said Bunny. "That is, if you'll let us."

Grandpa Brown thought for a little while.

"Well," he said slowly, "I guess I don't mind. I s'pose it's only a make-believe circus; isn't it?"

"Yes," answered Bunny. "Just pretend."

"Oh, well, go ahead. Have all the fun you like, but don't get hurt. Are you two going to be the whole circus?"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Bunny. "We're going to have Tom White and Ned Johnson——"

"And Nellie Bruce and Sallie Smith," added Sue.

"All the children around here; eh?" asked grandpa. "Well, have a good time. I used to have a trained dog once. He would do finely for your circus."

"What could he do?" Bunny wanted to know.

"Oh, he could pretend to say his prayers, make believe he was dead, he could turn somersaults and climb a ladder."

"Oh, if we only had him for our circus!" cried Bunny.

"Where is that dog now, Grandpa?" asked Sue.

"Oh, he died a good many years ago. But I guess you can get your dog Splash to do some tricks. Have a good time, but don't get into mischief."

"We won't!" promised Bunny Brown and

his sister Sue. And they really meant what they said. But you just wait and see what happens.

The rest of that day Bunny and Sue talked about the circus they were going to have. Grandma Brown, as well as father and Mother Brown, said she did not mind if a circus was held in the barn, but she wanted Bunny to be careful about going on the trapeze.

"Oh, if I fall I'll fall in the hay," said the little fellow with a laugh.

"And what are you going to use to put stripes on your half of Splash?" asked his mother.

"Paint, I guess," said Bunny.

"Oh, no. Paint would spoil Splash's nice, fluffy hair. I'll mix you up some starch and water, with a little bluing in, that will easily wash off," promised Mother Brown.

"Blue stripes!" cried Bunny. "A tiger doesn't have blue stripes, and my half of Splash is going to be a tiger."

"You can pretend he is a new sort of tiger," said Grandma Brown, and Bunny was satisfied with that.

That afternoon Bunny and Sue went to the homes of the neighboring children to tell them about the circus. Nearly all the children said they would come, and take part in the show in the barn.

"Oh, we'll have a fine circus!" cried Bunny Brown that night when they were all sitting on the porch to cool off, for it was quite hot.

"Yes, I guess we'll all have to come and see you act," said Daddy Brown.

"Hark! What's that?" suddenly asked Grandma Brown. They all listened, and heard some one knocking at the back door.

"I'll go and look," said grandpa. "Maybe it's a tramp. There have been some around lately."

Bunny and Sue thought of the tramps who had taken the big cocoanut-custard cake, about which I told you in the book before this one. Perhaps those tramps had gotten out of jail, and had come to get more cake. Bunny and Sue sat close to mother and father while grandpa went around the corner of the house to see who was knocking at the back door.

They all heard grandpa speaking to some

one. And the answers came in a boy's voice.

"What do you want?" asked grandpa.

"If—if you please," said the strange boy's voice, "I—I'm very hungry. I haven't had any dinner or supper. I'm willing to do any work you want, for something to eat. I—I——"

And then it sounded as though the strange boy were crying.

"That isn't a tramp!" exclaimed Grandma Brown, getting up. "It's just a hungry boy. I'm going to feed him,"

They all followed Grandma Brown around to the back stoop. There was a light in the kitchen, and by it Bunny and Sue could see a boy, not quite as big as Bunker Blue, standing beside grandpa. The boy had on clothes that were dusty, and somewhat torn. But the boy's face and hands were clean, and he had bright eyes that, just now, seemed filled with tears.

"What is it?" asked Grandma Brown.

"It's a hungry boy, Mother. A strange, hungry boy!" said grandpa. "I guess we'll have to feed him, and then we'll have him tell us his story."

CHAPTER V

SOMETHING QUEER

"COME right in and sit down!" was Grandma Brown's invitation. And she said it in such a kind, pleasant voice that the strange boy looked around as though she were speaking to some one who had come up behind him, that he could not see.

"Come right in, and get something to eat," went on the children's grandmother.

"Do you—do you mean *me?*" asked the strange boy.

"Why, yes. Who else do you s'pose she meant?" asked Grandpa Brown.

"I—I didn't know, sir. You see I—I'm not used to being invited into places that way. I thought maybe you didn't mean it."

"Mean it? Of course I mean it!" said Grandma Brown.

"You're hungry; aren't you?" asked Grandpa Brown.

"Hungry. Oh, sir—I—I haven't had anything since breakfast, and then it was only a green apple and some berries I picked."

"Land sakes!" cried Grandma Brown. "Why didn't you go up to the first house you came to and ask for a meal?"

"I—I didn't like to, ma'am. I thought maybe they'd set the dog on me, thinking I was a tramp."

By this time Splash, the big pet dog, had come around the path. The strange boy looked around as though getting ready to run.

"He won't hurt you," said Bunny quickly. "Splash is a good dog."

Splash went up to the strange boy, rubbed his cold, wet nose on the boy's legs, and then Splash began to wag his tail.

"See, he likes you," said Sue. "He's going to be in our show; Splash is. He's going to be half a blue-striped tiger when we have our circus."

"Circus!" cried the strange boy. "Is—is there a circus around here?" and he seemed much surprised, even frightened, Bunny thought afterward.

"No, there isn't any circus," said Grandpa Brown. "It's only a make-believe one the children are getting up. But we musn't keep you standing here talking when you're half starved. Get him something to eat, Mother. The idea of being afraid to go to a house and ask for something!" said Grandpa Brown, in a low voice.

"That shows he isn't a regular tramp; doesn't it?" asked Mother Brown.

"I should say so—yes," answered grandpa. "But there is something queer about that boy."

By this time Grandmother Brown had gone into the kitchen. She told the strange boy to follow her, and soon she had set out in front of him some bread and butter, a plate of cold meat and a big bowl of cool, rich, creamy milk.

"Now you just eat all you want," said Grandma Brown, kindly.

Bunny and Sue had come out into the kitchen, and they now stood staring at the strange boy. He had a pleasant face, though, just now, it looked pale, and all pinched up from hunger, like a rubber ball that hasn't any air in it.

The boy looked around the kitchen, as though he did not know just what to do. In his hand he held a ragged cap he had taken off his head when he came in.

"Did you want something?" asked Grandma Brown.

"I—I was looking for a place to hang my hat. And then I'd like to wash. I'm all dust and dirt."

Grandma Brown smiled. She was pleased—Bunny and Sue could see that—for Grandma Brown liked clean and neat boys and girls who hung up their hats and bonnets, and washed their faces and hands, without being told to do so.

"Hang your cap over on that nail," said Grandpa Brown, pointing to one behind the stove. "And you can wash at the sink to-night. Now you two tots had better go to bed!" grandpa went on, as he saw Bunny and Sue standing with their backs against the wall, watching the strange boy.

"We—we want to stay and see him eat," objected Sue.

The boy smiled, and Mrs. Brown laughed.

"This isn't a circus, where you watch the animals eat," she said. "You come along with me, and, when this young man has finished his supper, you can see him again."

"Oh, but—if you please—you're very good. But after I eat this nice meal I'll—I'll be going on," said the boy.

"No you'll not!" said Grandpa Brown. "You'll just stay here all night. We can put you up. I think it's going to storm. You don't want to be out in the rain?"

"Oh, that's very good of you," the boy said. "But I don't want to be a trouble to you."

"It won't be any trouble," Grandpa Brown said. Then he went out of the kitchen with Mother Brown, Bunny and Sue, leaving Grandma Brown to wait on the strange boy. Splash stayed in the kitchen too. Perhaps the big dog was hungry himself.

"That boy isn't a regular tramp," said Grandpa Brown. "But there is something queer about him. He seems afraid. I must have a talk with him after he eats."

"He seems nice and neat," said Mother Brown.

"Yes, he's clean. I like him for that. Well, we'll soon find out what he has to tell me."

But the boy did not seem to want to talk much about himself, when Grandpa Brown began asking questions, after the meal.

"You have run away; haven't you?" Grandpa Brown asked.

"Yes—yes, sir, I did run away."

"From home?"

"No, I haven't had any home, that I can remember. I didn't run away from home. I was working."

"On a farm?"

"No, sir. I didn't work on a farm."

"Where was it then?"

"I—I'd rather not tell," the boy said, looking around him as though he thought some one might be after him.

"Look here!" said Grandpa Brown. "You haven't been a bad boy; have you?"

"No—no, sir. I've tried to be good. But the—the people I worked for made it hard for me. They wanted me to do things I couldn't, and they beat me and didn't give me enough to eat. So I just ran away. They

may come after me—that's why I don't want to tell you. If you don't know where I ran from, you won't know what to tell them if they come after me. But I'll go now."

The boy got up from the table, as though to go out into the night. It was raining now.

"No, I won't let you go," said Grandpa Brown. "And I won't give you up to the people who beat you. I'll look into this. You can stay here to-night. You can sleep in the room with Bunker Blue. He'll look after you Now I hope you have been telling me the truth!"

"Oh, yes, sir. It's all true. I did work for—for some people, and they half starved me and made me work very hard. I just had to run away, and I hope they don't catch me and take me back."

"Well, I hope so, too," Grandpa Brown said. "I can't imagine what sort of work you did. You don't look very strong."

"I'm not. But I didn't have to be so very strong."

"Not strong enough to work on a farm, I guess."

"Oh, I'm strong enough for that—yes, sir! Feel my muscle!" and the boy bent up his arm. Grandpa Brown put his hand on it.

"Yes, you have some muscle," he said. "Well, maybe you will be all right. Anyhow you'll be better off for a good night's sleep. I'll call Bunker and have him look after you."

The strange boy, who said his name was Ben Hall, went up stairs with Bunker Blue to go to bed. Bunny and Sue were also taken off to their little beds.

"Well, what do you think of the new boy?" Bunny heard his father ask of Grandpa Brown, just before the lights were put out for the night.

"Well, I think there's something queer about him," Grandpa Brown said. "I'd like to know where he was working before he came here. But I'll ask him again tomorrow. He seems like a nice, clean boy. But he certainly is queer!"

CHAPTER VI

BEN HALL HELPS

EARLY the next morning Bunny and Sue jumped out of bed, and ran down stairs in their bath robes. Out into the kitchen they hurried, where they could hear their grandmother singing.

"Where is he?" asked Bunny, eagerly.

"Did he have his breakfast?" Sue wanted to know.

"Who?" asked Grandma Brown. "What are you children talking about? And why aren't you dressed?"

"We just got up," Bunny explained, "and we came down stairs right away. Where is Ben Hall?"

"Did he go away?" asked Sue, and she looked all around the kitchen.

"Bless your hearts!" exclaimed Grandma Brown. "You mean the strange, hungry boy,

who came last night? Oh, he's up long ago!"

"Did he go away?" asked Sue.

"I hope he didn't," cried Bunny. "I like him, and I hope he'll stay here and play with us. He could help us with the circus."

"Did he go away?" asked Sue again, anxiously.

"Oh, no," Grandma Brown answered. "He went out to help Bunker Blue feed the chickens and the cows and horses. He is very willing to work, Ben is."

"Is grandpa going to keep him?" Bunny asked.

"For a while, yes," said his grandmother. "The poor boy has no home, and no place to go. Where he ran away from he won't tell, but he seems badly frightened. So we are going to take care of him for a little while, and he is going to help around the farm. There are many errands and chores to do, and a good boy is always useful."

"I'm glad he's going to stay," said Bunny.

"So'm I," added Sue. "Maybe he can make boats, Bunny, and a water wheel that we can fix to turn around at a waterfall."

"Maybe," agreed Bunny. "Where is Ben, Grandma?"

"Oh, now he's out in the barn, somewhere, I expect. But you two tots must get dressed and have your breakfast. Then you can go out and play."

"We'll find Ben," said Bunny.

"Yes," agreed Sue. "We'll have two boys to play with now—Ben and Bunker Blue."

"Oh, you two children mustn't expect the big boys to play with you all the while," said Grandma Brown. "They have to work."

"But they can play with us sometimes; can't they, Grandma?" asked Bunny.

"Oh, yes, sometimes."

A little later the two children, having had their breakfast, ran to the barn, to look for Ben and Bunker. They found them leading the horses out to the big drinking trough in front. The trough was filled from a spring, back of the barn, the water running through a pipe.

"Oh, Bunker, give me a ride on Major's back!" cried Sue, as she saw her father's red-haired helper leading the old brown horse.

"Put me on his back, Bunker!"

"All right, Sue! Come along. Whoa, there, Major!"

Major stood still, for he was very gentle. Bunker lifted Sue up on the animal's broad back, and held her there while he led the horse to the drinking trough.

"Do you want a ride, too?" asked Ben Hall of Bunny.

"Yes," answered the little boy.

"Here you go then. We'll both ride this horse to water."

Ben Hall did a strange thing. All at once he jumped up in the air, and before Bunny or Sue knew what he was doing the strange boy was sitting on the back of Prince, the other horse. He had jumped up as easily as a bouncing, rubber ball.

"Now then, come over here, and I'll lift you up in front of me!" called Ben to Bunny, and soon the little fellow was sitting on the back of Prince, while Ben guided him to the drinking trough.

"Say, that's a good way to get up on a horse's back, Ben!" called Bunker Blue, who

had seen what Ben had done. "Where did you learn that trick of jumping up?"

"Oh, I—I just sort of learned it—that's all. It's easy when you practise it."

"Well, I'm going to practise then," said Bunker. "I'd like to learn to jump on a horse's back the way you did."

When the horses had had their water Bunker lifted Sue down from the back of Major.

"But I want to ride back to the barn," the little girl said.

"And in a minute so you shall," promised Bunker. "Only, just now, I want to see if I can jump up the way Ben did."

Bunker tried it, but he nearly fell.

"I can't do it," he said. "It looks easy, but it's hard. You must have had to practise a good while, Ben."

"Yes, I did."

"How long?"

"Oh, about five years!"

Bunker Blue whistled in surprise.

"Five years!" he cried. "I'll never be able to do that. Let me see once more how you do it."

Ben lifted Bunny down, and once more the strange boy leaped with one jump upon the back of the horse.

"Why, he does it just like the men in the circus!" exclaimed Sue. "Oh, Bunny, Ben will make a good jumper in our circus."

"Yes," agreed the little boy. "Do you think, Ben, you could show me how to get on a horse's back that way?" Bunny asked.

"Well, I'm afraid not—not such a little boy as you," answered Ben, as he lifted Bunny up on Prince's back once more for the ride to the barn.

The horses were tied in their stalls again, after Bunny and Sue had been lifted from the backs of the animals. Then Bunny said:

"You are going to stay here and help work on the farm, Ben. My grandmother said so. And, if you are, will you come out and look at the barn where we are going to have our circus? Maybe you and Bunker can help us put up the trapeze."

"Not now, Bunny boy," said Bunker. "We have to go and pull weeds out of the garden. We'll look at the barn right after dinner."

And this Ben and Bunker did. Bunny and Sue showed Ben the mow, and the pile of hay, into which the trapeze performers were to fall, instead of into nets.

"So they won't get hurt," Bunny explained. "We haven't any nets, anyhow."

"Do you think we could have a circus here?" Sue wanted to know.

"Why, I should think so," Ben answered, looking up toward the roof of the barn. "Yes, you could have a good make-believe circus here."

"Will you help?" asked Bunny eagerly.

Ben Hall laughed, and looked at Bunny and Sue in a queer sort of way.

"What makes you think I can help you make a play-circus?" he asked.

"Oh, I guess you can, all right," spoke up Bunker Blue. "I guess you know more about a circus than you let us think. Don't you now?"

"Oh, well, I've seen 'em," said Ben, slowly.

"And the way you jumped on the horse—why, you must have been watching pretty hard to see just how to do that," Bunker went

on. "I've seen lots of circuses, but I can't jump up the way you can, Ben."

"Then he can ride a horse in our circus," said Sue.

"Can you hang on a trapeze?" asked Bunny.

"Well, maybe," the new boy answered. "But you haven't any trapeze here, have you?"

"We can make one, out of a broom stick and some clothes line," said Bunny. "I've got 'em all ready," and he showed where he had put, in a hole in the hay, the rope and stick.

"Good! That's the idea!" exclaimed Ben Hall. "Now I'll just climb up to the roof beams, and fasten the rope of the trapeze."

Up climbed Ben, and he was making fast the ropes, when, all at once Bunny, Sue and Bunker Blue, who were watching the strange boy, saw him suddenly slip off the beam on which he was standing.

"Oh, poor Ben!" sighed Sue. "He's going to get an awful hard bump, so he is!"

CHAPTER VII

BUNNY HAS A FALL

DOWN and down, from the big beam near the top of the barn, fell Ben Hall. And, as Bunny Brown and his sister Sue watched the new, strange boy, something queer happened.

For, instead of falling straight down, head first or feet first as you would think any one ought to fall, Ben began turning over and over. Over and over he turned, first his feet and then his head and then his back being pointed toward the pile of hay on the bottom of the barn floor.

"Oh, look! look!" cried Sue.

"What—what makes him do that?" asked Bunny Brown.

"I guess he wants to," answered Bunker Blue. Bunny and his sister thought they were going to be frightened when they saw Ben slip and fall. But when the children saw Bunker Blue laughing they smiled too.

It was queer to see Ben turning over and over in that funny way.

"I guess he likes to do it," said Bunker.

"Whoop-la!" yelled Ben as he came somersaulting down, for that is what he was doing; turning one somersault after another, over and over in the air as he fell.

And then, in a few seconds, he landed safely on his feet in a soft pile of hay, so he wasn't hurt a bit.

"Oh!" exclaimed Sue.

"Oh my!" cried Bunny Brown.

"Say, that was fine!" shouted Bunker Blue. "How did you do it?"

"Oh, I—I just did it," answered Ben, slowly, for he was a little out of breath. "I slipped, and when I found I was going to fall, I began to turn somersaults to make it easier coming down."

"I should think it would be harder," said Bunny Brown.

"Not when you know how," answered Ben, smiling.

"Where'd you learn how?" Bunker wanted to know.

"Oh, a man—a man showed me how," returned Ben. "But never mind about that now. I must fasten the rope to the beam, and then we'll fix the trapeze so Bunny can do some circus acts on it."

"But not high up!" cried Sue. "You won't go on a high trapeze, will you, Bunny?"

"Not very high," he answered. "But I would like to turn somersaults in the air like you, Ben. Will you show me how?"

"Some day, when you get bigger. You're too small now."

"I wouldn't want to turn somersaults," said Sue, shaking her head.

"They aren't for girls, anyhow," flung forth Bunny.

Bunker Blue looked at Ben sharply.

"I think I can guess where you learned to turn those somersaults in the air," said the boat-boy. "It was in a—"

"Hush! Don't tell any one!" whispered Ben quickly. "I'll tell you all about it after a while. Now help me put up the trapeze."

Bunny heard what Ben and Bunker said, but he did not think much about it then. The

little boy was looking up to see from what a height Ben had fallen, and Bunny was wondering what he would ever do if he tumbled down so far.

Bunker and Ben climbed the ladder to the beam far above the hay pile, and soon they had fastened up the ropes of the trapeze. They pulled hard on them to make sure they were strong enough, so Bunny would not have a fall.

Then the piece of broom handle was tied on the two lower ends of the ropes, and the trapeze was finished.

"Now you can try it, Bunny," said Bunker, after he had swung on the trapeze for a few times to make sure it was safe.

Bunny walked across the barn floor where some hay had been spread to make a sort of cushion.

"We'll use hay, instead of a net as they do in a circus," Bunny said.

"Anyhow we haven't got any net," put in Sue.

"We can make believe the hay is a new kind," said her brother.

Bunny hung by his hands from the wooden bar of the trapeze, just as he had seen the men do in the circus. Then he began to swing slowly back and forth.

"Oh, Bunny!" cried Sue. "That's fine. Now turn yourself inside out, like the circus man did."

"No, Bunny can't do that yet," said Ben. "He must first do easy things on the trapeze. Turning yourself inside out is too hard. Bunny is not strong enough for those tricks."

To and fro swung Bunny, but soon his arms began to get tired.

"I—I want to get down!" he called. "Stop the swing—I mean the trapeze," for the trapeze was very much like a swing, as I have told you, only, instead of a board, it had only a stick to which the little boy was holding by his hands. "I want to get down," Bunny called. "Stop me, Bunker."

"Let go and jump," advised Ben.

"Oh, I—I'm afraid," said Bunny.

"You won't get hurt!" exclaimed the older boy. "You must learn to jump from the trapeze into the soft hay. That's what they do

in a circus. Jump while you're swinging. You won't get hurt."

"Are you sure, Ben?"

"Sure. Give a jump now, and see what happens."

Bunny wanted to do some of the things he had seen the circus men do, and one of them was jumping from the trapeze. The little boy looked down at the pile of hay below him. It seemed nice and soft, but it also looked to be a good distance off.

"Come on, Bunny, jump!" called Bunker.

"All right. Here I come!"

Bunny let go of the trapeze bar. He shot through the air, and, for a second or two, he was afraid he was going to be hurt. But, the next thing he knew, he had landed feet first on a soft pile of hay and he wasn't hurt a bit!

"Good!" cried Bunker Blue.

"You did that well!" said Ben Hall.

"Just like in a circus," added Sue.

"Did I do it good?" asked Bunny Brown.

"You surely did. For the first time it was very good for such a small boy," answered Ben. "Now try again."

"Oh, I like it!" Bunny cried. "I'm going to do it lots and lots of times, and then I'm going to turn somersaults."

"Well, not right away," advised Ben. "Try the easy part for a while yet."

Bunny swung on the trapeze some more, and dropped into the soft hay. He was not at all afraid now, and each time he did it he liked it more and more.

Sue, also, wanted to try it, and so she hung by her little hands. But Bunker Blue put his strong arms under her so, in case she slipped, she would be caught. Sue did not swing on the trapeze, nor jump, as Bunny had done.

Bunker and Ben put up more trapezes in the barn—big ones for themselves. Ben could swing and turn somersaults and drop off into the hay from away up near the roof of the barn. Bunker could not do quite as well as this, but, for all that, he was pretty good.

"Will you two act in our circus?" asked Bunny of Bunker and Ben.

"Why, yes, I guess I will, if your grandfather lets me stay here on this nice farm," Ben answered.

"Oh, he'll let you stay," Bunny said. I'll tell him we want you in our circus."

"All right," laughed Ben. "Bunker and I will practise some trapeze acts for your show."

For a little while longer Bunny and Sue played about in the barn. Bunny found an old strawberry crate, with a cover on.

"This will make a wild animal cage," he said. "The slats are just like the bars of a cage, and the animal can look through."

"What wild animal will you put in there?" asked Bunker.

"Oh, I guess I'll put in Splash. He is going to be half a blue striped tiger."

"No! No!" cried Sue. "That crate isn't big enough for Splash. You'll squash him all up. I'm not going to have my half of Splash all squashed up, Bunny Brown!"

"Well, then I'll get a bigger cage for Splash. We can get a little dog, and put him in here."

Two or three days after this Bunny and Sue again went out to the barn to look at the circus trapezes, and play. Bunker Blue and Ben

were not with them this time, as the two older boys were weeding the garden for Grandpa Brown.

Bunny swung on his little, low trapeze, and then, after he had jumped off into the hay as Ben had taught him, the little fellow began climbing the ladder to the beam on which was fastened the big and high trapeze.

"Oh, Bunny! Where you going?" asked Sue.

"Up here. I want to see how high it looks."

"Oh, Bunny Brown! You come right down, or I'll go and tell mamma! She said you weren't to climb up high."

"I—I'm not going very high, Sue."

Bunny was half way up the ladder. And, just as he spoke to Sue, his foot slipped, and down he fell, in between two rounds of the ladder.

"Oh! oh!" cried Sue. "Oh, Bunny! You're going to fall!"

But Bunny did not fall all the way. As he slipped, his hands caught hold of a round of the ladder, and there he clung, just as if he had hold of the bar of his swinging trapeze.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DOLL IN THE WELL

BUNNY BROWN hung there on the ladder, swinging to and fro. On the barn floor below him, stood his sister Sue, watching, and almost ready to cry, for Sue was afraid Bunny would fall.

"Oh, Bunny! Bunny!" she exclaimed. "Don't fall! Don't fall!"

"I—I can't help it," Bunny answered. "My fingers are slipping off!"

And indeed they were. He could not hold to the big round stick of the ladder as well as he could to the smaller broom-handle stick of his trapeze.

Bunny Brown looked down. And then he saw something that frightened him more than had Sue's cries.

For, underneath him was the bare floor of the barn, with no soft hay on which to fall—

on which to bounce up and down like a rubber ball.

"Oh, Sue!" cried Bunny. "I'm going to fall, and—and—"

He did not finish what he started to say, but he wiggled his feet and legs, pointing them at the bare floor of the barn, over which he hung.

But Sue saw and understood.

"Wait a minute, Bunny!" she cried. "Don't fall yet! Wait a minute, and I'll throw some hay down there for you to fall on!"

"All—all right!" answered Bunny. He did not want to talk much, for it took nearly all his breath and strength to hold on to the ladder. But he was glad Sue had thought of the hay. He was going to tell her to get it, but she guessed it herself.

Putting her doll carefully in a corner, on a little wisp of hay, Sue ran to the edge of the mow, where there was a big pile of the dried grass, which the horses and cows eat.

With both her chubby hands, Sue began to pull the hay out, and scatter it on the barn floor under Bunny. Her brother hung right

over her head now, clinging to the ladder.

"Haven't you got 'most enough hay there now, Sue?" asked Bunny. "I—I can't hold on much longer."

"Wait just a minute!" called Sue, as she ran back to the mow. This time she managed to gather up a lot of hay in her two arms. This she piled on the other, and she was only just in time.

"Look out!" suddenly cried Bunny. "Here I come!"

And down he did come. Plump! Right on the pile of hay Sue had made for him. And it was a good thing the hay was there, or Bunny might have hurt his legs by his tumble. He did not try to turn a somersault as Ben did, the time he fell. Bunny was glad enough just to fall down straight.

"Oh, Bunny! Bunny! Did you hurt yourself?" cried Sue, as she saw her brother sit down in the pile of hay.

Bunny did not answer for a minute. He looked all around, as though he did not know exactly what had happened. Then he glanced up at the ladder to which he had clung.

"That—that was a big fall," he said slowly. "I—I'm glad the hay was there, Sue. I'm glad you put it under me."

"So'm I glad," declared Sue. "I guess you won't want to be in a circus, will you, Bunny?"

"Sure I will. Men fall in circuses, only they fall in nets. But hay is better than a net, 'cept that it tickles you," and Bunny took from his neck some pieces of dried grass that made him wiggle, and "squiggle," as Sue called it.

"Hello! What happened here?" asked a voice, and the children looked up to see, standing in the door of the barn, Grandpa Brown. "What happened?" asked the farmer. "Did you fall, Bunny?"

I think he must have guessed that, from seeing the way Bunny was sitting on the little pile of hay.

"Yes, I—I slipped off the ladder," said the little boy. "But I didn't get hurt."

"'Cause I spread hay under him," said Sue. "I thought of it all by myself."

"That was fine!" said Grandpa Brown. "But, after this, Bunny, don't you climb up on any ladders, or any other high places. If

you are going to use my barn for your circus, you must not get hurt."

"We won't!" Bunny promised.

"Then keep off ladders. Your little low trapeze is all right, for you will fall in the hay if you slip off that. But no more ladder-climbing!"

"All right, Grandpa." Bunny got up. Sue picked up her doll, and Grandpa Brown put back the hay into the mow, for he did not like his barn floor covered with the dried grass, though, of course, he was very glad Sue had put some there for Bunny to fall on.

Bunny and Sue went out of the barn, and walked around to the shady side. It was only a little while after breakfast, hardly time to go in and ask for something more to eat, which the children did every day about ten o'clock. At that hour Grandma Brown generally had some bread and jam, or jelly tarts, ready for them.

"What can we do until jam-time?" asked Sue, of her brother.

"I don't know," he answered. "It's pretty hot."

There was nothing more they could do about the circus just then. Bunker and Ben were to make some more trapezes, put other things in the barn, and make the seats. Several other boys and girls had been asked to take part in the "show," but they were not yet sure that their mothers and fathers would let them.

So, for a few days, Bunny and Sue could do no more about the circus.

"But we ought to do *something,*" said Bunny. "It's so hot—"

That gave Sue an idea.

"We could go paddling in the brook, and get our feet cooled off," said Bunny's sister.

"Yes, but we wouldn't be back here in time to get our bread and jam."

"That's so," Sue agreed.

It would never do to miss "jam-time."

"My doll must be hot, too," Sue went on. "I wonder if we could give her a bath?"

"How?" Bunny wanted to know.

"Why, down in the well," suddenly cried Sue. "We could tie a string around her, and let her down in the well water. That would

give her a bath. She's a rubber doll, and a bath won't hurt her. It will do her good."

"We'll do it!" cried Bunny.

The well was not far from the house. A little later, with a string he had taken from his kite, Bunny was helping Sue lower her rubber doll down the big hole, at the bottom of which was the cool water that was pulled up in a bucket.

"Splash!" went the doll down in the well. By leaning over the edge of the wooden box that was built around the water-place, Bunny and Sue could see the rubber doll splashing up and down in the water far below them.

"Oh, she likes it! She likes it!" cried Sue, jumping up and down in delight. "Doesn't she just love it, Bunny?"

"I guess so," her brother answered. "But she can't talk and tell us so, of course."

"Course not!" Sue exclaimed. "My dolls can't talk, 'ceptin' my phonograph one, and she says 'Mamma' and 'Papa,' only now she's broken, inside, and she can't do nothin' but make a buzzin' sound, but I like her just the same."

"But if a doll can't talk, how do you know when she likes anything?" asked Bunny.

"Why, I—I just know—that's all," Sue answered.

"All right," agreed Bunny. "Now it's my turn to pull her up and down, Sue."

There was a long string tied around the doll, and the two children were taking turns raising and lowering Sue's play-baby, so the rubber doll would splash up and down in the water.

"All right. I'll let you do it once, and then it's my turn agian," Sue said. "I guess she's had enough bath now. I'll have to feed her."

"And we'll get some bread and jam ourselves, Sue."

Just how it happened neither Bunny nor Sue could tell afterward, but Bunny either did not get a good hold of the string, or else it slipped through his fingers.

Anyhow, just as Sue was passing the cord to him, it slipped away, and down into the well went doll, string and all.

"Oh, Bunny! Bunny Brown!" cried Sue. "You've drowned my lovely doll! Oh, dear!"

CHAPTER IX

THE STRIPED CALF

BUNNY BROWN was so surprised at seeing the rubber doll and string slip back with a splash into the well, that, for a moment, he did not know what to do or say. He just stood leaning over, and looking down, as though that would bring the doll back.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Sue again. "Oh, Bunny!"

"I—I didn't mean to!" pleaded Bunny sadly enough.

"But I'll never get her back again!" went on Sue. "Oh, my lovely rubber doll!"

"Maybe—maybe she can swim up!" said Bunny.

"She—she can not!" Sue cried. "How can she swim up when there isn't any water 'cept away down there in the bottom of the well?"

"If she was a circus doll she could climb up the bucket-rope, Sue."

"Yes, but she isn't a circus doll. Oh, dear!"

"And if I was a circus man, I could climb down the rope and get her!" Bunny went on.

"Oh, don't you dare do that!" Sue fairly screamed. "If you do you'll fall in and be drowned. Don't do it, Bunny!" and she clung to him with all her might.

"I won't, Sue!" the little fellow promised. "But I can see your doll down there, Sue. She's floating on top of the water—swimming, maybe, so she isn't drowned.

"Oh, I know what let's do!" Bunny cried, after another look down the well.

"What?" Sue wanted to know.

"Let's go tell grandpa. He'll get your doll up with the long-handled rake."

"With the rake?" cried Sue.

"Yes. Don't you remember grandpa told us how once the bucket of the well got loose from the rope, and fell into the water. He fished the bucket up with the rake, tied to a long pole. He can do that to your doll."

"But he might stick her with the teeth of the rake," said Sue. She knew the iron teeth of a rake were sharp, for once she had stepped

on a rake when Bunny had left it in the grass, after raking the lawn at home.

"Well, maybe grandpa can tangle the rake in the string around the doll, and pull her up that way. It wouldn't hurt then."

"No," agreed Sue. "That wouldn't hurt."

"Then let's go tell grandpa," urged Bunny once more.

Leaving the doll to swim in the well as best she could, the two children ran toward the house. They saw their grandpa coming from it, and at once they began to cry:

"Oh, Grandpa, she fell in!"

"Come and get her out of the well!"

"Bring the long-handled rake, Grandpa!"

Grandpa was so surprised, at first, that he did nothing except stand still and look at the children. Then he managed to ask:

"Who is it? What is it? What happened? Who fell down the well? Did Bunny fall in? Did Sue?"

Then as he saw the two children themselves standing and looking at him, Grandpa Brown knew nothing had happened to either of them.

"But who is in the well?" he asked.

"My rubber doll," answered Sue. "Bunny let the string slip when we gave her a bath."

"But I didn't mean to," Bunny said. "I couldn't help it. But you can get her out with the rake; can't you, Grandpa. Same as you did the bucket."

"Well, I guess maybe I can," Grandpa Brown answered. "I'll try anyhow. And, after this, you children must keep away from the well."

"We will," promised Bunny.

The well bucket often came loose from the rope, and grandpa had several times fished it up with the rake, which he tied to a long clothes-line pole. In a few minutes he was ready to go to the well, with Bunny and Sue. Grandpa Brown carried the rake, and, reaching the well, he looked down in it.

"I don't see your doll, Sue," he said.

"Oh, then she's drowned! Oh, dear!"

"But I see a string," went on Grandpa Brown. "Perhaps the string is still fast to the doll. I'll wind the string around the end of the rake, and pull it up. Maybe then I'll pull up the doll too."

And that is just what grandpa did. Up and up he lifted the long-handled rake. Around the teeth was tangled the end of the string. Carefully, very carefully, Grandpa Brown took hold of the string and pulled.

"Is she coming up, Grandpa?" asked Sue anxiously.

"I think she is," said grandpa slowly. "There is something on the end of the string, anyhow. But maybe it's a fish."

Grandpa smiled, and then the children knew he was making fun.

"Oh, dear!" said Sue. "I hope my doll hasn't turned into a goldfish."

But nothing like that had happened. Up came the rubber doll, safely, on the end of the string. Water ran from the round hole in the doll's back—the hole that was a sort of whistle, which made a funny noise when Sue squeezed her doll, as she did when "loving" her.

"There you are! Your doll's all right," said Grandpa Brown. "Now you children must not come near the well again. When you want to give your doll a bath, Sue, dangle her in the brook, where it isn't deep. And if

you put a cork in the hole in her back, she won't get full of water and sink."

"That's so," said Bunny Brown. "The water leaked in through that hole. We'll stop it up next time, Sue."

"Oh, no!" Sue cried. "That hole is where she breathes. But I'll only wash her in a basin after this, so she can't get drowned."

It was now time for bread and jam, and Sue and Bunny were soon eating it on the shady back porch. Mother Brown told them, just as their grandpa had done, to keep away from the well, and they said they would.

Bunny and Sue then went wading in the brook until dinner time. And then they had a little sleep in the hammocks in the shade, under the apple tree.

"What shall we do now, Bunny!" asked Sue when she awoke from her little nap, and saw her brother looking over at her from his hammock. Sue always wanted to be doing something, and so did Bunny. "What can we do?" asked the little brown-eyed girl.

"Let's go out to the barn again," said Bunny. "Maybe Bunker Blue, or Ben, is out

there now, making some more circus things."

But when Bunny and Sue reached the place where they were going to have their show in a few weeks, they saw neither of the big boys. They did see something that interested them, though.

This was the hired man who, with a big pot of green paint, was painting the wheelbarrow.

"Hello, Henry!" exclaimed Bunny to the man, who was working in the shade at one side of the barn.

"Hello, Bunny!" answered Henry. "How are you this afternoon?"

"Good. How is yourself?"

"Oh, fine."

Henry went on putting green paint on the wheelbarrow. Then Bunny said:

"I couldn't do that; could I, Henry? I mean you wouldn't let me paint; would you?"

"No, Bunny. I'm afraid not. You'd get it all over your clothes. I couldn't let you."

"I—I thought you couldn't," returned Bunny with a sigh. "But I just asked, you know, Henry."

"Yes," said the hired man with a smile. "I

know. But you'd better go off and play somewhere else."

It was more fun, though, for Bunny Brown and his sister Sue to watch Henry paint, and they stood there for some time. Finally the hired man stopped painting.

"Guess I'll go and get a drink of water," he said, putting the brush in the pot of green paint. "Now don't touch the wheelbarrow."

"We won't!" promised Bunny and Sue.

Just then, inside the barn, there sounded a loud:

"Baa-a-a-a-a!"

"What's that, Bunny?" asked Sue.

"One of the new little calves. Want to see them?"

Of course Sue did, and soon she and Bunny were petting one of the calves. They were in little pens, by themselves, near the mother cows, and the children could reach over the sides of the pens, inside the barn, and pat the little animals.

All at once Bunny cried:

"Oh, Sue. I know what we can do!"

"What?" she asked.

"We can stripe a calf green, with the green paint, and we'll have a zebra for our circus."

"What's a zebra?" Sue wanted to know.

"It's a striped horse. They have 'em in all circuses. We'll make one for ours."

"Does zebras have green stripes, Bunny?"

"I don't know. But green paint is all we have, so we'll use that. A green striped zebra would be pretty, I think."

"So do I, Bunny. But Henry told us not to touch the paint."

"No, he didn't, Sue. He only told us to keep away from the wheelbarrow, and I am. I won't go near it. But we'll get the pot of paint, and stripe the calf green."

"All right," agreed Sue. "I'll hold the paint-pot, and you can dip your brush in."

Not meaning to do anything wrong, of course, Bunny and Sue hurried to get the pot of paint. Henry had not come back. Leaning over the edge of the calf's pen, Bunny dipped the brush in the paint, and began striping the baby cow.

"Baa-a-a-a-a!" went the little animal, and the old cow went: "Moo!"

CHAPTER X

THE OLD ROOSTER

AGAIN and again Bunny Brown dipped the brush in the green paint the hired man had left, and stripe after stripe did the little fellow put on the calf.

"She'll be a regular circus zebra when I'm done," said Bunny Brown to his sister Sue. Both children laughed in glee.

"Are you going to paint both sides of the calf, Bunny?"

"I am if I can reach. Maybe I can't. Anyhow, a zebra ought to be painted on both sides. Not like we're going to do our dog Splash; only on one side, to make a pretend blue-striped tiger of him."

Sue seemed to be thinking of something.

"Doesn't he look nice?" asked Bunny of his sister. "Isn't he going to be a fine zebra?"

He stood back from the box-stall where the

calf was kept, so Sue could see how the little animal looked.

"Doesn't he look pretty, Sue? Just like a circus zebra, only of course they're not green. But isn't he nice?"

"Yes," said Sue, "he is pretty."

The calf, after jumping around some when Bunny first put the paint on, was now standing very still, as though he liked it. Of course the calf did not know that the paint would not wear off for a long time. Then, too, the cow mother had put her head over from the next stall, where she was tied, and she was rubbing her big red tongue on the calf's head. The calf liked its cow mother to rub it this way, and maybe that is why the little calf stood still.

"It's going to look real nice, Bunny," said Sue, as she looked at the green stripes Bunny had put on. "I—I guess I'll let you put blue stripes on my half of Splash, too. Then he'll look all over like a tiger; won't he, Bunny?"

"Sure. I'm glad you'll let me, Sue. 'Cause a dog, only half striped, would look funny. Now I'll see if I can put some stripes on the other side of the calf."

Bunny tried to reach the side of the little animal he had not yet painted, but he could not do it from where he stood.

"I'm going over in the stall with it," Bunny said. "You hand me the pail of paint when I get there, Sue."

"Oh, Bunny! Are you going right in with the calf?"

"Yes."

"He—he'll bite you!"

"No, he won't. Calves haven't any teeth. They only eat milk, and they don't have to chew that. They don't get teeth until they're big.

"I'm not afraid," said Bunny Brown, as he climbed over into the calf's pen. Sue stood as near as she could, so Bunny could dip his brush in the green paint. Bunny was careful not to get any on his own suit, or on Sue's dress. That is he was as careful as any small boy could be. But, even then, he did splash some of the paint on himself and on Sue. But the children did not think of this at the time. They were so busy having fun, turning a calf into a circus zebra.

THEY WERE BUSY TURNING A CALF INTO A CIRCUS ZEBRA.
Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue Playing Circus. *Page* 84.

Bunny had put a number of green stripes on one side of the calf, and now he was ready to put some on the other. But the calf did not stand as still with Bunny inside the stall with her, as when he had been outside. The calf seemed frightened.

"Baa-a-a-a-a!" it cried. "Baa-a-a-a-a! Baa-a-a-a-a!"

And the old mother cow cried:

"Moo! Moo! Moo!"

She did not like to see Bunny so close to her baby calf, I guess. But the old cow did not try to hook Bunny with her horns. She only looked at him with her big, brown eyes, and tried to reach her tongue over and "kiss" the calf, as Sue called it.

"Stand still!" Bunny said to the calf, but the little animal did not want to. Perhaps it thought it had had enough of the green paint. It moved about, from one side of the box to the other, and Bunny had hard work to put on any more stripes.

"Isn't that enough?" asked Sue, after a bit. "It looks real nice Bunny. You had better save some green paint for the other calf."

"Yes, but I'm only going to stripe one," answered Bunny. "It's too hard. One zebra is enough for our circus. We'll make the other calf into a lion. A lion doesn't have any stripes."

"All right," agreed Sue. "Then come on out, Bunny, 'cause I'm tired of holding this paint for you."

"In a minute, Sue. I'll be right out. I just want to put some stripes on the calf's legs. They have to be striped same as the sides and back."

And that was where Bunny Brown made one of his mistakes. He should have let the calf's legs alone. For, no sooner did the little animal feel the tickling of the paint brush on its legs than it gave a loud cry, and began to kick.

Out with its hind legs it kicked, and, as Bunny happened to be stooping down, just then, near the calf's feet, the little boy was kicked over. Right over he went, spilling some of the paint on himself, but the most of it, I am glad to say, went on the straw in the calf's box-stall.

"Oh, Bunny!" cried Sue. "Oh, Bunny Brown!"

Her brother did not answer. He had fallen down on his face, and his mouth was full of straw. And when he did get up he saw that the calf had kicked open the gate of its stall, and was running around the barnyard, all green striped and spotted.

"Moo! Moo!" cried the mother cow, when she saw her little one break out. Then the old cow pushed very hard on the gate that shut her in. Open went the gate, and out ran the cow to be with her little calf.

"Oh, Bunny! Look!" cried Sue. "Our circus zebra-cow will run away!"

Bunny jumped to his feet, and, leaving the overturned pot of paint behind him, out he ran into the barnyard.

"Whoa! Whoa there, bossy-calf!" he cried.

"You don't say whoa to cows, you say that to horses!" called Sue to her brother.

"What do you say to cows?" Bunny wanted to know.

"You call 'Co boss! Co boss! Co boss'!" answered Sue. "I know 'cause I heard grand-

ma call them to be milked. Call 'Co boss!' Bunny."

The little boy did, but there was no need to, for the little calf, once it found that the mother cow was with it, did not run any farther. The mother cow put out her red tongue and "kissed" her little calf some more. She did not seem to mind the green paint, though perhaps if she had gotten some in her mouth she might not have liked it.

"Well, anyhow," said Bunny Brown, "we have a striped zebra for our circus. And when I get some blue paint I'll paint our dog Splash, and make a tiger of him, Sue."

"Did the calf-zebra hurt you when she kicked you over, Bunny?" Sue wanted to know.

"No, hardly any. Her feet are soft, and I fell on the straw. But all the paint is spilled."

"Maybe there's a little left so Henry can finish the wheelbarrow," suggested Sue.

"I'll go and look," offered Bunny. But he did not get the chance. For just then Henry came into the barnyard.

"Have you seen my pot of green paint," he asked. "I left it—"

Then he saw the green striped calf. At first he laughed and then he said:

"Oh, this is too bad! That's one of your grandpa's best calves, and he won't like it a bit, painting him that way."

"He's a zebra," said Bunny.

"No matter what he is," and Henry shook his head, "it's too bad. I shouldn't have left the paint where you could get it. I'll have to tell Mr. Brown."

Bunny and Sue felt bad at this. They had not thought they were doing anything wrong, but now it seemed that they were.

"Will—will grandpa be very sorry?" asked Sue.

"Yes, he'll be very sorry and angry," answered the hired man, "he'll not like it to see his calf all streaked with green paint."

But Grandpa Brown was not as angry at Bunny and Sue as he might have been. Of course he said they had done wrong, and he felt bad. But no one could be angry for very long at Bunny Brown and his sister Sue. They were so jolly, never meaning to be bad. They just didn't think.

But of course you know that not thinking what you are doing often makes as much trouble as though you did a thing on purpose.

"Well, I guess I'll have to forgive you youngsters this time," said Grandpa Brown. "But don't paint any more of my farm animals without asking me. Now I'll see if we can get the green paint off the calf."

"Oh, can't you leave it on, Grandpa?" asked Bunny. "It was awful hard to make him striped like a zebra, and we want him in our circus to be one of the wild animals. Let the stripes stay on."

And grandpa had to, whether he wanted to or not, for they would not come off. The hired man tried soap and water. But the calf would not stand still long enough to let him scrub her.

"I guess we'll just have to let the green paint wear off," said Grandpa Brown. "But never do such a thing again, Bunny."

"I won't," promised the little boy.

The calf and the mother cow were put back in their stalls. Bunny and Sue were cleaned of the green paint that had splattered on them,

and Henry found enough paint left in the can to finish the wheelbarrow.

"Well, we've got a start for our circus, anyhow," said Bunny to Sue a few days after he had painted the calf. The green stripes had dried now, and made the calf look very funny indeed. Some of the other cows and calves seemed frightened at the strange, striped one, but the mother cow was just as fond of her little one as before.

"You'll need other animals besides a striped calf, and your dog Splash, in the circus," said Bunker Blue to Bunny one day.

"Yes, I guess we will. I'll go and ask Sue about it."

Bunny always liked to talk matters over with his sister. He found her on the side porch, making a doll's dress.

"Sue," said Bunny, "we have to have more make-believe wild animals for our show."

"Yes?" asked Sue. "What kind?"

"Well, maybe we ought to have a camel."

"Camels is too hard to make," said Sue. "Their humps might fall off. Why don't you make a ockstritch, Bunny? An ockstritch

what lays big eggs, and has tail feathers for ladies' hats. Make a ockstritch."

"How?" asked Bunny.

Sue thought for a minute. Just then the old big rooster strutted past the porch.

"He would make a good ockstritch, Bunny," said Sue. "He has nice long tail feathers. Can you catch him?"

"Maybe," hesitated Bunny. "Oh, I know what I'll do!" he exclaimed. "I'll get the clothes line for a lasso, and I'll pretend to be a Wild West cowboy. Then I can lasso the rooster and make an ostrich of him."

"Oh, fine!" cried Sue, clapping her hands. The rooster, who did not in the least guess what was going to happen to him, flapped his wings and crowed loudly.

CHAPTER XI

PRACTICE FOR THE CIRCUS

BUNNY BROWN took a piece of clothes line that hung down from one of the posts. He was sure his grandma or his mother would not want this end, so he could take it.

"Anyhow, it isn't wash-day," said Bunny to Sue, "and as soon as I lasso the rooster I can put the line back again. I can tie on what I cut off."

Bunny had an old knife Bunker Blue had given him. It was a knife Bunker had used to open clams and oysters, and was not very sharp. That was the reason Bunker gave it to Bunny. Bunker did not want the little boy to cut himself. With this old knife Bunny cut off a bit of clothes line. He had to saw and saw back and forth with the dull blade of the knife before he could cut the line.

But at last he had a long piece of rope.

"Now I'll make a lasso just like the cowboys have in the Wild West," said Bunny.

Bunny had once seen a show like that, so he knew something of what the cowboys did with their lassos, which are long ropes, with a loop in one end. They throw this loop around the head, or leg, of a cow or a horse, and catch it this way, so as not to hurt it.

"Now see me catch the rooster, Sue!" called Bunny.

"I'll help you," offered the little girl. "You stand here by the rose bush, I'll shoo the rooster up to you, then you can lasso him."

"All right!" cried Bunny, swinging the piece of clothes line around his head as he had seen the cowboys do in the show.

"Cock-a-doodle-do!" crowed the rooster, and then he made a funny gurgling noise, as he saw Sue running toward him. The old rooster was not used to children, as, except when Bunny Brown and his sister Sue came to their grandpa's farm, there were no little ones about the place. And when the old rooster saw Sue running toward him, he did not know what to make of the little girl.

"Shoo! Shoo!" cried Sue, waving her hands. "Shoo! Scat!"

"Cock-a-doodle-do!" crowed the rooster, and it sounded just as if he said, "I don't know what to do!"

"Shoo! Shoo!" cried the little girl, and she tried to drive the rooster over toward Bunny, so he could lasso the big crowing bird.

But the rooster was not going to be caught as easily as that. He ran to one side, around the rose bush and off toward the garden.

"Get him, Bunny! Get him!" cried Sue.

"I will!" shouted the little make-believe cowboy. After the rooster he ran, swinging his lasso. "Whoa there! Whoa!" called Bunny.

"Shoo! Shoo!" exclaimed Sue.

"No—no! Don't do that!" begged Bunny.

"Don't do what?" Sue asked.

"Don't shoo him that way. That makes him run. I want him to stand still so I can catch him."

"But you said cowboys catched things when they were running, like this rooster is," objected Sue.

"Yes," agreed Bunny, "but I haven't been a cowboy very long you see. I want the rooster to stand still so I can lasso him. So don't *shoo* him—just whoa him!"

Then Bunny called:

"Whoa! Whoa there!"

"That's what you say to a horse—not to a rooster," said the little girl.

"I know," Bunny answered. "But I guess this rooster knows horse talk, 'cause there's horses around here. Whoa there!"

But even if the rooster did understand horse talk, he was not going to stop and let Bunny lasso him. That was sure. On and on the rooster ran, crowing and cackling. The hens and other roosters heard the noise, and crowed and cackled too, wondering what it was all about.

"Here he comes, Bunny! Here he comes!" cried Sue, as the big old rooster, having run toward a fence, until he could go no farther, had to turn around and run back again. "Get him, Bunny!"

"I will!" cried the little boy. "I'll get him this time."

But the rooster was running very fast now, for he was very much scared. Back and forth he went, from one side to the other. He did come close to Bunny, but when the little boy threw his clothes line rope lasso it fell far away from the rooster.

"Oh, you missed him!" cried Sue, much disappointed.

"But I'll get him next time," said Bunny, as he picked up his lasso and ran after the rooster.

Back and forth around the garden, under the lilac and rose bushes, ran Bunny and Sue after the old rooster. The rooster was getting tired now, and could not go so fast. Neither could Bunny nor Sue, and Bunny's arm was so tired, from having thrown his lasso so much, that he wanted to stop and rest. But still he wanted to catch the rooster.

"Here he comes now—get him, Bunny!" cried Sue, as she went around one side of the currant bush, while Bunny came around the other side. The rooster was right between the two children, and as there was a fence on one side of him, and the bush on the other, it

looked as if he would be caught this time.

"Oh, get him, Bunny!" Sue called. "Get him!"

"I—I will!" answered her brother. "I'll just grab him in my arms. I can put the lasso on him afterward."

The rooster was running away from Sue who was right behind him, and the rooster was heading straight for Bunny. The little boy put out his arms to grab the big fowl, when the rooster, with a loud crow and cackle, flew up over Bunny's head, over the fence and into the meadow beyond.

And Bunny was running so fast, and so was Sue, that, before they could stop themselves, down they both fell, in the soft grass. For a moment they sat there, looking at one another. Then Sue smiled. She was glad to sit down and rest, even if she had fallen. And so was Bunny.

"Well, we didn't get him," said Bunny slowly, as he looked at the rooster, now safe on the other side of the fence.

"No," said Sue. "But you can climb over the fence in the meadow."

"I—I guess I don't want to," said the little fellow.

"Hello! What's going on here? Who's been chasing my old rooster?" asked Grandpa Brown, coming up just then, and looking at the two children.

"We—we were chasing him Grandpa," said Bunny, who always told the truth.

"We was goin' to make a ockstritch of him," Sue explained. "A ockstritch for our circus in the barn."

"Oh, an ostrich!" laughed Grandpa Brown. "Well, I'd rather you wouldn't take my best big rooster. I have some smaller, and tamer ones, you may take for your circus."

"Really?" asked Bunny. "And can we pretend they are ostriches?"

"Yes, you can put them in wooden cages and make believe they are anything you like," said Grandpa Brown. "Only, of course, you must be kind to them."

"Sure!" said Bunny Brown. "We won't hurt the roosters."

"When are you going to have your show?" asked Grandpa Brown.

"Oh, next week," Bunny answered. "Some of the boys and girls are coming over to-day, and we're going to practise in the barn."

"Well, be careful you don't get hurt," said their grandpa.

"And can we have the greep-striped calf for a zebra?" Bunny wanted to know.

"Oh, I guess so; yes. The stripes haven't worn off him yet, and they won't for some time. So you might as well play with him."

"We don't want to play with him," Bunny explained. "He—he jumps about too much. We just want to put him in a cage and make believe he is a wild animal."

"Like a ockstritch," added Sue. The ostrich seemed to be her favorite.

"An ostrich isn't an animal," carefully explained Bunny. "It's a big bird, and it hides its head in the sand, and they pull out its tail feathers for ladies' hats."

"Well, it's wild, anyhow," said Sue.

"Yes, it's wild," admitted Bunny.

Grandpa Brown showed the children two tame roosters, that would let Bunny and Sue stroke their glossy feathers.

"You may put them in a box, and make believe they are any sort of wild bird or animal you like," said the farmer.

The children promised to be kind to the roosters. They did not put them in cages that day, as it was too soon.

That afternoon Tom White, Nellie Bruce, Jimmie Kenny, Sallie Smith and Ned Johnson came over to see Bunny and Sue. They all went out to the barn, and there they got ready for the circus. Bunny and Sue, as well as the other children, were to be dressed up in funny clothes, which their mothers said they would make for them.

Bunny was to do some "acts" on the trapeze, and fall down in the hay. Then he and Sue were to do part of a little Punch and Judy show they had once given, though Bunny, this time, had no big lobster claw to put on his nose.

"All ready now!" called Bunny, when his friends were in the barn. "All ready to practise for the circus!"

CHAPTER XII

THE LITTLE CIRCUS

"BUNNY! Bunny Brown! What am I going to be in the circus?" I want to be a clown!"

"Yes, I want to be a clown, too, and throw water over another clown, like I saw in a circus once!"

"Well, you're not going to throw any water on me!"

"Yes I can if Bunny Brown says so! It's *his* circus!"

Tom White, Jimmie Kenny and Ned Johnson were talking together in one corner of the barn. Ned wanted to be a clown, and throw water on some one else. Jimmie did not want to be the one to get wet, nor did Tom White.

"Bunny, can't I be a clown?" asked Ned.

"I'm going to be a wild animal trainer—make-believe!" exclaimed Sue, "and I'm go-

ing to be near the cage where the blue-striped tiger is. I'm going to make him roar."

Sallie Smith looked a bit scared.

"Oh, it's only make-believe," Sue explained.

"Yes, I know," said Sallie. "But—Oh, dear! a blue-striped tiger!"

"Oh, it's only our big dog Splash," went on Sue. "First I was only going to let Bunny stripe his half of Splash. But a half a blue-striped tiger would look funny, so I said he could make my half of Splash striped too. It will wash off, for it's only bluing, like mother puts on the clothes."

"And we're going to have a striped zebra, too," said Bunny.

"Oh, let's see it!" begged the three boys.

"It's only one of grandpa's calves," cried Sue, "but it really has green stripes on it. Bunny put them on, and they're green paint, and they won't come off 'till they wear off, grandpa says, and the calf ran away, and kicked Bunny over and——"

"Oh, Sue, don't tell everything!" cried Bunny. "You'll spoil the show."

"Let's see the striped calf!" begged the three boys.

"No, we've got to practise for the circus," Bunny insisted. "Now I'll do my trapeze act," and he climbed up to the bar that hung by the long ropes from the beam in the barn.

"I want to do a trapeze act, too!" cried Tom White.

"Say, we can't all do the same thing!" Bunny said. "That isn't like a real circus. It's got to be different acts."

"Oh, say!" cried Ned Johnson. "I know what I can do! I can ride you in a wheelbarrow, Tom, and upset you. That will make 'em all laugh."

"It won't make me laugh, if you upset me too hard!" declared Tom.

"I'll spread some hay on the floor, like the time I did when Bunny fell," said Sue. "Then you won't be hurt. It doesn't hurt to fall on hay; does it, Bunny?"

"Nope."

"All right. Ned can upset me out of the wheelbarrow if he does it on the hay," agreed Tom.

So those two boys began to practise this part of the circus, while Bunny swung from the trapeze. Jimmie Kenny said he would climb up as high as he could and slide down a rope, like a sailor.

"I'll have some hay under me, too, so if I slip I won't be hurt," he said.

Indeed, if it had not been for the big piles of soft hay in grandpa's barn I don't know what the little circus performers would have done.

While the boys were practising the things they were going to do, Sue and her little girl friends made up a little act of their own.

Each one had a doll, and they practised a little song which they had sung in school. It was about putting the dollies to sleep in a cat's cradle, and a little mouse came in and awakened them, and then they went out to gather flowers for the honey bees.

Just a simple little song, but Sue and her friends sung it very nicely.

"And I know something else you can do, Sue, besides being a keeper of wild animals," said Bunny.

"What?" asked his sister.

"You can ride in the wheelbarrow and drive Ned and Tom for your horses—make-believe, you know."

"But I don't want to be upset, even on the hay!" Sue said.

"No, we won't upset you," promised Ned.

Then they practised that little act with Sue.

"When we give our real circus," said Bunny, "we can cover the wheelbarrow with flowers, and nobody will know what it is you're riding in, Sue."

"That will be nice!"

As the days went on, Bunny and Sue found they would have to have more children in their little circus, so others were invited. One boy brought an old rocking horse, and another had one almost like it, so they gave a "pretend" horse race around the barn floor.

Bunker Blue made a big sea-saw for the children, and every one who came to the show was to have a free ride on this.

"We ought to have a merry-go-'round," said Bunny one day.

"I'll make you one," offered Ben Hall, the

strange boy, who was still working on grandpa's farm.

"Oh, will you! How?" asked Bunny.

Ben took some planks and nailed them together, criss-cross, like an X. Then he put them on a box, and on the ends of the planks that stuck out he fastened some wagon wheels. When four children sat down on the planks, and some one pushed them, they went around and around as nicely as you please, getting a fine ride around the middle of the barn floor.

"But we ought to have music," said Sue.

"I'll play my mouth organ," offered Bunker Blue.

At last the day of the little circus came. Bunny and Sue had decided that it was to be free, as they did not want pins, and none of the country children had any money to spend. So the circus was free to old folks and young folks alike.

"You'll come; wont you, Mother?" asked Bunny the morning of the circus.

"Oh, yes, of course."

"And will you, Daddy?" Sue wanted to know.

"Yes, little girl. I want to see you ride in your chariot, as you call it." For Bunny had named the wheelbarrow that was to be covered with flowers, a chariot, which is what they use to race with in a real circus.

Splash had been most beautifully striped with blue, and, though he did not like being shut up in a box, with slats nailed in front to serve as iron bars, still the big dog knew it was all in fun, so he stayed quietly where Bunny put him.

The striped calf was in another cage, and he was given a nice pail full of milk to keep him quiet, so he would not kick his way out. Calves like milk, you know.

The two roosters, which Sue said were the wild "ockstritches," behaved very nicely, picking up the corn in their cage as though they had been in a circus many times before. Grandpa also let the children take the old turkey gobbler and put him in a box.

"What shall we call him?" asked Sue, just before the show was about to begin.

"Oh, he'll be the elephant," said Bunny. "See, he's got something hanging down in

front like an elephant's trunk. And we didn't get time to dress the pig up like an elephant."

"But a elephant has four legs, Bunny, and the turkey has only two."

"Oh, well, we can pretend he was in a railroad wreck, and lost two of his legs. Circuses do get wrecked sometimes."

"All right, Bunny."

All the children who were to take part in Bunny's and Sue's show were in the barn, waiting for the curtain to be pulled back. For grandmother and Mother Brown had made a calico curtain for the children. Bunker Blue and Ben said they would stand, one on either side, to pull the curtain back when the show started.

Bunker was going to play his mouth organ, while Ben said he would make what music he could by whistling and blowing on a piece of paper folded over a comb. You can make pretty good music that way, only, as Ben said, it tickles your lips, and you have to stop every once in a while.

Many children from nearby farms came to the little circus in the barn, and some of their

fathers and mothers also came. It was a fine day for the show.

"Are you all ready, Bunny?" asked Bunker, who, with Ben, stood behind the curtain.

"All ready," answered the little boy.

"Here we go!" cried Bunker. Then he played on his mouth organ, Ben tooted on the comb and the curtain slid back on the wires by which it was stretched across the stage, or platform, in the barn.

"Welcome to our show!" cried Bunny Brown, making a bow to the audience which was seated on boxes and boards out in front. "We will now begin!" he went on. "And after the show you are all invited to stay and see the wild animals. We have a blue-striped tiger, a wild zebra and an——"

"An elephant, only he lost two legs in a accident," said Sue in a shrill whisper, fearing Bunny was going to forget about the turkey.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WILD ANIMALS

EVERYONE laughed when Sue said that, and Sue herself blushed as red as the ribbon on her hair, and the sash her mother had pinned around her waist.

"Does your elephant eat peanuts?" asked Daddy Brown, smiling.

"No, I don't guess so," answered Sue. "He likes corn better."

"Now the show's going to begin!" cried Bunny Brown. "Get ready everybody. The first will be a grand trapeze act! Come on, boys! Play some music, please, Bunker!"

Bunker played a new tune on his mouth organ. Then Bunny, Ned Johnson and Tom White got on the trapezes, for Bunny had decided that his one act, like this, was not enough. It would look more like a real circus with three performers.

Back and forth on the flying trapezes swung Bunny and his two friends. Of course such little fellows could not do many tricks, but they did very well, so all the grown folks said. They hung by their hands, and by their legs, and Ned Johnson, who was quite strong for his age, "turned himself inside out," as he called it, by pulling up his legs and putting them over his head, and under the trapeze bar.

Suddenly Bunny Brown gave a call.

"All ready now for our big swing!"

"I'm ready!" answered Tom.

"So am I," added Ned.

The three boys swung back and forth. All at once Bunny cried:

"Let go!"

Away they sailed through the air.

"Oh, they'll be hurt! They'll fall and be hurt!" cried Grandma Brown.

"No, this is only part of the show," said Mother Brown.

And so it was. For Bunny, Ned and Tom landed safely on a big pile of hay, having jumped into the mow when they let go of the trapeze bars.

"How was that?" cried Bunny, laughing, while Bunker and Ben played the music.

"Fine!" cried Daddy Brown.

"It's almost as good a show as the one I paid real money to see," laughed grandpa.

"What's next?" asked Jimmie Kenny's mother, who had come with her neighbor, Mrs. Smith.

"It's your turn now, Sue," whispered Bunny to his sister. "Do your act."

So Sue, and her little girl chums, sang their doll song. It was very much liked, too, and the people clapped so that the little girls had to sing it over again.

The curtain was now pulled across the stage while Ned and Tom got ready for one of the clown acts. They were dressed in queer, calico suits, almost like those worn by real clowns in a circus, and the boys had whitened their faces with chalk, and stuck on red rose leaves to make red dots.

Ned came out in front, with Tom in a wheelbarrow, for they had decided this between themselves. Ned wheeled Tom about, at the same time singing a funny song, and

then, out from behind a barrel, rushed Jimmie Kenny. Jimmie had a pail, and he began crying:

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

So loudly did he shout, and so much in earnest did he seem, that some of the farmers began to look about as though they were afraid Grandpa Brown's barn was on fire.

"Don't worry! It's only in fun," said grandpa.

Ned and Tom did not seem to know what to make of Jimmie's act. He was not supposed to come out when they did.

"Now this is where I upset you, Tom," said Ned in a low voice.

"Well, as long as you turn me over on the soft hay I don't mind," answered the other boy, for they had made this up between them.

Over went the wheelbarrow, and Tom was spilled out.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" cried Jimmie again, and then dashed a pail of water over Tom and Ned.

"Waugh! Ouch! Stop that!" spluttered Ned. "Stop it!"

"That—that wasn't in the show!" stammered Tom, for some of the water went in his mouth.

"I know it wasn't in it," laughed Jimmie, "but I thought I'd put it in!"

At first Tom and Ned were a little angry, but when each looked at the other, and saw how funny he was, with half the white and red spots washed off his face, each one had to laugh.

The audience laughed, too. The water did no harm, for it was a hot day, and the boys had on old clothes. So they did not mind. But Tom and Ned decided to play a little trick on Jimmie. So, while he was laughing at what he had done to them, they suddenly ran at him, caught him, and put him in the wheelbarrow. Before he could get out they began wheeling him around the barn floor.

"Now dump him!" suddenly cried Tom, and out shot Jimmie on a pile of hay. Before he could get up Tom had dashed some water on him.

"Now we're even!" cried Ned. "You're wet, too!"

It was all in fun, and no one minded getting wet. Then the circus went on. Sue was ridden in the flower-covered wheelbarrow, driving Ned and Tom. The boys acted like very nice horses indeed, and went slowly or fast, just as Sue called to them. She had a wreath of daisies on her hair, and looked like a little flower queen.

After that Bunker Blue and Ben Hall played some music on the mouth organ and comb, while Bunny and Sue were getting ready to give their little Punch and Judy show, which they had played once before, back home.

"Why don't you do some of your tricks, Ben?" asked Bunker of the new boy, when Bunny and Sue were almost ready.

"Oh, I can't do any tricks," said Ben, turning away.

"Yes you can! I guess you know more about a circus than you are willing to tell; don't you?"

But Ben did not answer, and then the curtain had to be pulled back to let Bunny and Sue be seen.

I will not tell you about the Punch and Judy show here, as I have written about it in the first book. Besides, it was not as well done by Bunny and Sue as was the first one.

Bunny forgot some of the things he should have said, and so did Sue. Besides, Bunny had no big, red, hollow lobster claw to put over his nose, to make himself look like Mr. Punch. But, for all that, the show was very much enjoyed by all, especially the children.

The race on the two rocking horses was lots of fun, and toward the end one of the boys rocked his horse so much that he fell over, but there was some straw for him to fall on, so he was not hurt. Up he jumped, on to the back of his horse again, and away he rode. But the other boy won the race.

Then Bunny and Sue jumped from some carpenter horses, through hoops that were covered with paper pasted over them, just like in a real circus.

"Crack!" went the paper as Bunny and Sue jumped through.

"Oh, it's just like real; isn't it, Mother?" called a little girl in the audience. It was

very still when she said this, and everyone laughed so loudly that Bunny Brown looked around. And, as he did not look where he was jumping, he tumbled and fell off the saw-horse.

But Bunny fell in a soft place, and as a saw-horse is only made of wood, like a rocking horse, it did not kick, or step on, the little boy. So everything was all right.

The performing part of the circus came to an end with a "grand concert." Bunny, Sue and all the others stood in line and sang a song, while Bunker Blue played on the mouth organ, and Ben on the paper-covered comb.

"And now you are all invited to come and see the wild animals!" called Bunny. "Señorita Mozara will show you the blue striped tiger that does tricks. Señorita Mozara is my sister Sue," he explained, "but wild animal trainers all have fancy names, so I made that one up for her."

Everyone laughed at that.

"Right this way, ladies and gentlemen, to see the wild animals!" cried Sue. Ben Hall had told her what the circus men said, and Sue

tried, in her childish voice, to do it as nearly like them as possible. "Right this way!" she cried. "You will see the blue-striped tiger—of course it's only our dog Splash, and he won't hurt you," said Sue quickly, as she saw some of the little children hanging back.

"He will eat meat from my hand, and stand up on his hind legs. He will lie down and roll over. This way, everybody!"

Splash did look funny, all striped with bluing as he was. But he did the tricks for Sue, and everyone thought it was a very nice part of the circus.

"Over this way is the striped zebra," went on Sue, as she led the way to where the green-painted calf was shut in a little pen. The men, women and children were laughing at the queer animal, when something happened.

Splash got out of his cage. Either some one opened the door, or Splash pushed it open. And as Splash bounded out he knocked over the cage where the turkey gobbler "elephant" was kept.

"Gobble-obble-obble!" went the turkey, as it flew across the barn. Children screamed,

and some of them backed up against the cage of roosters, so it broke open and the crowing roosters were loose.

"Baaa-a-a-a!" went the green striped calf, and giving a big jump, out of the box it came, and began running around, upsetting both Bunny and Sue.

"Oh, the wild animals are loose! The wild animals are loose!" cried a little girl, while the big folks laughed so hard that they had to sit down on boxes, wheelbarrows, boards or whatever they could find. It was very funny.

CHAPTER XIV

BUNNY AND SUE GO SAILING

CERTAINLY all the animals in the circus which Bunny and Sue had gotten up, were loose, though of course they were not exactly "wild" animals. The green-striped calf was wild enough when it came to running around and kicking up its heels, but then calves do that anyhow, whether they are striped like a zebra or not, so that doesn't count.

"Look out! Look out, everybody!" cried Bunny Brown. For, just then, the calf, having run to one end of the barn and finding the doors there closed, had run back again, and was heading straight for the place where they were all standing.

"Somebody catch him!" cried Ben Hall.

"It would take a cowboy to do that," spoke up Bunker Blue. "A cowboy with a lasso!"

"I'll catch him! I'll get him!" cried Bunny.

"I had a lasso that I was trying to catch the old rooster with. I'll lasso the calf!"

"No, little man. You'll not do anything of the sort!" exclaimed Mr. Brown, catching his son up in his arms. "You'd better stay away from that calf. It would not mean to hurt you, perhaps, but it might knock you down and step on you."

The calf was now running back and forth, bleating and looking for some place where it could get out of the barn. For it did not like being in a circus, though, at first, it had been quiet enough.

Splash thought it was great fun. He ran here and there, barking loudly, and racing after the calf. The two roosters were crowing as loudly as they could, fluttering here, there, everywhere. One nearly perched on top of Grandma Brown's head.

The horses could be heard neighing and stamping about in their stalls. Perhaps they, too, wanted to join in the fun.

"Oh, dear!" cried Sue. "I don't like this. Let's go out, Bunny."

But with the calf running back and forth in

the barn, crossing this way and that, it was not easy for Bunny, Sue and the others to keep out of its way.

"I guéss I'll have to take a hand in this," said Grandpa Brown. He knew how to handle cows, horses and calves you see. But there was no need for him to do anything.

Just then the hired man, who had been milking some of the cows, opened the barn door to see what all the noise meant. He had a pail of milk in his hand, and, no sooner had the calf seen this, than the striped creature made a rush for the hired man.

"Look out!" cried Grandpa Brown.

"Come back here!" cried Sue, to the calf.

Perhaps she thought the calf would mind her, since Sue had been the make-believe wild animal trainer in the circus. But all the green-striped calf thought of just then was the pail of milk it saw.

Right at the hired man it rushed, almost knocking him down.

"Here! Here! Look out! Stop it! That milk isn't for you!" cried the hired man, trying to push the calf to one side.

But the calf was hungry, and it had made up its little mind that it was going to have that milk. And it did. Before the hired man could stop it, the calf had its nose down in the pail of nice, warm, fresh milk.

"Let him have it," said Grandpa Brown, with a laugh. "The milk will keep him quiet, and we folks can get out. The circus is over; isn't it, Bunny?"

"Oh, yes, Grandpa. But we didn't think the wild animals were going to get loose. How did you like it?"

"Do you mean how did I like the wild animals getting loose?" asked Grandpa Brown, with a laugh.

"No, the circus," answered Bunny. "Was it good?"

"It certainly was!" cried his grandfather. "I liked it very much!"

"And so did I," said grandma. "But I was afraid you would be hurt when you jumped that time, Bunny."

"Oh, that's just a circus trick," Bunny said. "You ought to see Ben jump. Go on, Ben, show 'em how you can turn over in the air."

"Not now, Bunny. I haven't time. I'm going to help Bunker clean up the barn."

There were many things to be put away after the circus, for Grandpa Brown had said if the children used his barn they must leave it neat and clean when they finished.

By this time the grown people who had come to the circus, and the boys and girls, too, began to leave. The calf was now standing still, drinking the milk from the pail. Splash had stopped barking. The two roosters had gotten out of the barn, and everything was quiet once more.

The circus was over, and everyone said he had had a good time. Some of the little folks wanted to see it all over again, but Bunny said that could not be done. The grown folks said Bunny Brown and his sister Sue were very clever to get up such a nice little show.

"But of course we didn't do it all," explained Bunny, who like to have others share in the praise. "We never could have done it if grandpa hadn't let us take his barn, or if Bunker and Ben hadn't helped us. It was as much their show as it was ours."

"Yes, Bunker and Ben were very good to help you," said Bunny's mother. "And now I think it is time for you and Sue to wash and get ready for supper."

"I'd like to have a bigger show, in a tent some day," said Bunny.

"Yes, that would be nice," agreed Sue.

"Well, if I'd known you wanted a tent instead of my barn, I could have given you one," said Grandpa Brown.

"Oh, have you really a tent?" asked Bunny, eagerly.

"Yes, it's an old army tent. Not very big, though. When I used to go camping with some old soldier friends of mine we took it with us. It's up in the attic now, I guess. But your circus is over, so you won't want a tent now."

"Maybe we'll have another circus some day," suggested Bunny. "Then could we take your army tent?"

"Oh, I guess so."

And when Bunny, Sue and the children and the grown folks had left the barn, Bunker Blue said to Ben Hall:

"Say, it wouldn't be such a bad idea to get up a circus among us big boys; would it?"

"Yes, it might be fun."

"If Mr. Brown has a tent we could use that, and we might borrow another. Would you like to do that, Ben?"

"I might."

"Say, look here!" exclaimed Bunker, "why don't you tell us more about yourself? You know something about a real circus."

"What makes you think so?" Ben asked.

"Oh, because I do. Were you ever in one?"

Instead of answering Ben cried:

"Look out! That plank is going to fall on your foot!"

Ben and Bunker were putting away the boxes and boards that had been used for seats in the circus. And, as Ben spoke, one of the boards slipped off a box. Bunker pulled his foot away, but not in time to prevent being struck by the board.

"Ouch!" he cried, and then he forgot that he had asked Ben about that boy's having been in a circus. Ben was glad he did not have to answer that question.

When Bunker and Ben had made the barn look as neat as it was before the little circus was held, and when the blue stripes had been washed off Splash, the two big boys sat and talked until supper was ready.

"What do you think about getting up a larger circus?" asked Bunker.

"Why, I guess we could do it," said Ben.

"Are there some big boys around here?"

"Lots of 'em. I've met some since I came here with Bunny, Sue and their family. We could get the big fellows together, and give a real show, in a tent."

"Would we have any little folks in it?"

"Well, we'd have Bunny and Sue, of course, because they started this circus idea. They're real cute; don't you think?"

"They certainly are," agreed Ben. "I like 'em very much. Well, we'll think about another circus. We'll need a larger tent than the one Mr. Brown has. Can we get one?"

"I think so. The folks around here used to have a county fair in a tent, and we might get that. We could charge money, too, if we gave a good show."

"That would be nice," said Ben, with a laugh. "I'd like to earn some money."

That night after supper, when Bunny and Sue were getting ready for bed, after having talked the circus all over again, they heard their grandfather saying to Daddy Brown:

"I can't make out what sort of boy that Ben Hall is."

"Why, isn't he a good boy?" asked Bunny's father.

"Oh, yes, he's a very good boy. I wouldn't ask a better. He does his work on the farm here very well. But there is something strange about him. He has some secret, and I can't find out what it is."

That was all Bunny heard. Sue did not stop to listen to that much. But Bunny wondered, as he was falling asleep, what Ben's secret was. It was some time before he found out.

"What are we going to do to-day, Bunny?" asked Sue, as she and her brother went outdoors, after breakfast next morning.

Bunny did not answer at first. He walked slowly down to the edge of the little pond

where the ducks swam, and there he saw an old barn door that had been laid down so Grandma Brown would not have to step in a wet and muddy place when it rained.

"What can we do to have some fun, Bunny?"

Still Bunny did not answer. He went closer to the old door, and then he suddenly said:

"Sue, we're going sailing!"

"Going sailing?"

"Yep. This will be our ship. All we'll have to do will be to put a sail on it and we'll sail across the duck pond. Come on."

Bunny found an old bag that had held corn for the chickens. He nailed this bag to a stick, and fastened the stick up straight in a crack in the barn door, which lay down flat on the ground. Then he and Sue managed to get the door in the duck pond, on the edge of which it had been placed over a mud puddle.

"There!" cried Bunny. "Get on the boat, Sue.

Bunny and Sue, who had taken off their shoes and stockings, stood up on the big door. It floated nicely with them. A little wind blew out the bag sail, and away they went.

CHAPTER XV

SPLASH IS LOST

"BUNNY! Oh, Bunny! We're sailing! We're sailing!" joyfully cried Sue, as she felt the barn-door raft moving through the water.

"Of course we're sailing," Bunny answered, as he stood up near the mast, which is what the stick that holds the sail is called. The mast Bunny had made was only a piece of a lima bean pole, and the sail was only an old bag. But the children had just as much fun as though they were in one of their father's big sail boats.

The duck pond was not very wide, but it was quite long, and when Bunny and Sue had sailed across it to the other side, they turned around to go to the upper end.

Bunny had found a piece of board, which he had nailed to another short length of bean pole, and this made a sort of oar. This he put

in the water at the back of the raft to steer with.

Bunny Brown knew something about steering a boat, for he had often been out with his father or Bunker Blue. And Bunny was quick to learn, though he was not much more than six years old.

Harder blew the wind on the bag-sail, and faster and faster went Bunny and Sue to the upper end of the pond. There were many ducks swimming on the water, or putting their heads down below, into the mud, to get the weeds that grew there. Sometimes they found snails, which some ducks like very much.

But when the ducks saw the barn-door raft sailing among them, they were afraid, and, quacking loudly, they paddled out of the way.

"Oh, Bunny!" cried Sue, as they sailed along, "there's the little ducks that were hatched out by the hen mother."

"So they are!" exclaimed the little boy. The little ducks were swimming in the water, and the hen mother was clucking along shore. She would not go in the water herself, but stayed as near to it as she dared, on shore.

Perhaps she wanted to make sure the little ducks would not drown. Of course they would not, unless a big fish pulled them under water, for ducks are made on purpose to swim. And there were no big fish in the pond, only little minnows, about half as big as a lollypop stick.

"Oh, Bunny!" cried Sue, as she saw the hen mother watching the little ducks paddle about, "Oh, Bunny, I know what we can do."

"What?"

"We can give the hen mamma a ride on our boat. Poor thing! She never can go paddling or swimming with her family. Let's take her on our boat, and she can sail with her little ducks then, and not get wet."

"That's what we'll do!" Bunny cried. "I'm glad you thought of it, Sue. We'll give the old hen a sail, and the ducks can paddle around with us."

Bunny steered the raft over to the shore where the hen was clucking away, calling to her ducklings to come to dry land. Perhaps she thought they had been in bathing long enough.

"Can we catch her?" asked Sue. "You know it's hard work to catch a chicken. You couldn't catch the old rooster."

"Oh, this is easier," Bunny said. "The hen mother won't run away from her little ducks."

And, for a wonder, Bunny was right. But then, as Grandma Brown told him afterward, the old hen was a very tame one, and was used to being picked up and petted.

So when Bunny and Sue reached the shore the hen did not run away. She let Bunny pick her up, and she only clucked a little when he set her down in a dry place on the door raft.

"Now we'll go sailing again," Bunny said, as he pushed off from the shore.

The old hen clucked and fluttered her wings. She was calling to her little ducks. And they came right up on to the raft, too. Perhaps they wanted to see what sailing was like, and then, too, they may have had enough of swimming and paddling for a time. At any rate, there the old mother hen and her little ducks were on the raft, with the two children.

"Now we'll give them a fine ride!" cried Sue. "Aren't they cute, Bunny?"

"Yes," said Bunny. He steered the raft, while Sue picked up one of the little ducks and petted it in her hand.

"Oh, you dear, cute, sweet little thing!" murmured Sue. "I wish I had you for a doll!"

On and on sailed Bunny and Sue, and I think it was the first time the old hen mother ever went sailing with her family of ducks. She seemed to like it, too, Bunny and Sue thought.

Finally, when the raft was in the middle of the pond, the little ducks gave some quacks, a sort of whistle and into the water they fluttered one after the other.

"Cluck! Cluck! Cluck!" went the hen mamma, fluttering her wings. "Cluckity-cluck-cluck!"

I suppose that meant, in hen talk:

"Come back! Come back! Stay on the boat and have a nice ride!"

But the little ducks wanted to swim in the water. And they did.

"Never mind," said Sue. "We'll keep on sailing, Bunny, and we'll sail right after the little ducks, so the hen mamma can watch them."

And this the children did. The little ducks paddled around in the water at the edge of the raft, and on the middle of it, in a dry place, perched the hen mother. It was great fun, and Bunny and Sue liked it very much.

"She is just like a trained hen," said Bunny. "If we have another and bigger circus, Sue, we can have this hen in it."

"Are we going to have another circus?"

"Maybe—a big one, in two tents. Bunker Blue and Ben are talking about it."

"Oh, that would be fun!" cried Sue, clapping her hands.

And then, all at once, as soon as Sue did this, the little ducks took fright, and hurried toward the shore. Perhaps they thought Sue was shooing them away, as her grandmother sometimes shooed the hens out of the garden.

Anyhow, the little ducks, half swimming and half flying, rushed for the shore, and no sooner had the hen mother seen them go, than with a loud cluck she raised herself up in the air, and flew to shore also. She had had enough of sailing, and she wanted to be with her little duck family.

"Oh, I didn't mean to scare them," said Sue.

"Never mind," Bunny comforted her. "I guess they had ride enough. Now we'll sail down to the other end of the pond."

But the wind was quite strong now. It blew very hard on the bag-sail, and the raft went swiftly through the water.

All at once there was a cracking sound, and the raft turned to one side.

"Oh, dear!" cried Sue. "What's the matter?"

Something flew down over her head, covering her eyes, and she could see nothing.

"Stop! Stop!" cried the little girl. "Is that you, Bunny?"

But Bunny did not answer. Sue pulled the thing off her head. When she could see she noticed that it was the bag sail. The beanpole mast had broken off close to where it was stuck in a crack in the barn door, and the sail had fallen on Sue.

But where was Bunny Brown?

Sue looked all around and then saw her brother, off the raft, standing up in the water behind her.

"What—what's the matter, Bunny?" asked Sue. "Don't you want to sail any more? What makes you be in the water? Oh, you're all wet!" she cried, as she saw that he had fallen in, right over his head.

"I—I couldn't help it," said Bunny. "I slipped in when the wind broke the sail. I—I fell on my back, and a lot of water got in my nose and mouth, but—but I got on my feet, and I'm all right now, Sue."

Bunny's father had taught him a little about swimming, and Bunny knew that the first thing to do, when you fall in water, is to hold your breath. Then, when your head bobs up, as it surely will, you can take a breath, and stand up, if the water isn't too deep.

So Bunny stood up, with the muddy water dripping from him, looking at Sue who was still on the raft, all alone.

"Oh, Bunny!" cried the little girl. "What shall I do? I—I'm afraid!"

"You're all right," Bunny answered bravely. "I'll come and push you to shore. I'm all wet so I might as well stay wading now."

The duck pond was not very deep, and

Bunny was soon wading behind the raft, pushing it, with Sue on it, toward shore. So his sister did not get more than her feet wet, and, as she had on no shoes or stockings, that did not matter.

"Oh, Bunny! What happened?" asked his mother, when she saw how wet he was, as, a little later, the two children came to the farmhouse. "What happened, Bunny?"

"Oh, Mamma. We gave the old hen a ride, so she could be with her little ducks," said Sue, "and the wind broke our sail, and it fell on me, and the ducks flew away and so did the hen mother, and Bunny fell in. That's what happened!"

"Mercy me, sakes alive! I should think that was enough!" cried Grandma Brown.

"Yes, perhaps you had better keep away from the duck pond after this," said Mother Brown. "Now I'll have to change all your clothes, Bunny."

Bunny was sorry his mother had so much work to do for him, but, as he said, he could not help it.

Washed and clean, Bunny and Sue, a little

later, went down the road to the house of Nellie Bruce.

"We'll take Splash with us," said Bunny. "Where is he? Here, Splash! Splash!" he called.

"I didn't see him all to-day," said Sue. "Maybe he didn't like being a blue-striped tiger in a circus, and he's gone back to our home by the ocean."

"He wouldn't go that far," said Bunny. "Besides, he liked being in the circus. He wagged his tail 'most all the while, and when he does that he's happy. Here, Splash!" he called again.

But Splash did not come, even when Sue called, and the two children went off to play without him. For a time they did not think about their dog, as they had such fun at the home of Nellie Bruce. They played tag, and hide-and-go-seek, as well as teeter-tauter, and bean-bag.

Then Mrs. Bruce gave them some cookies and milk, and they had a little play-party. But, when it came time for Bunny and Sue to go home, they thought of Splash again.

"I wonder if he'll be there waiting for us," said Sue, as they came within sight of their Grandpa Brown's house.

"I hope so," said Bunny.

But no Splash was there, and he had not been seen since early morning, before Bunny and Sue went sailing on the duck pond.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Sue. "Splash has run away. He's lost!"

"Dogs can't get lost!" Bunny declared.

"Yes, he is too lost," and tears came into Sue's eyes.

CHAPTER XVI

GETTING THE TENTS

BUNNY BROWN himself thought it was strange that Splash was not about to greet him and his sister as they came home from play. The big shaggy dog, that had once pulled Sue from the water, was very fond of the children, and if he did not go with them (which he did nearly every time) he was always waiting for them to come back.

But this time Splash was not to be seen. Bunny went about the yard, whistling, while Sue called:

"Splash! Here, Splash! I want you! Come here, Splash!"

But the joyful bark of Splash was not heard, nor did he come bounding around the side of the house, to play with Bunny Brown and his sister Sue, when they called.

"It is queer," said Mother Brown. "I saw

him early this morning, when I gave him his breakfast, and I thought he went with you, Bunny, when you and Sue went down to the duck pond."

"No, Splash didn't go with us," said Bunny. And this was rather strange, too, for the dog loved water, and played near it whenever he could, dashing in to bring out sticks that Bunny or Sue would throw in for him.

"And didn't he go down to Nellie Bruce's with you?" asked Grandma Brown. She was as fond of Splash as anyone.

"No, he didn't follow us," Sue answered. "We wanted him, too. But we thought sure he'd be here waiting for us. But he isn't," and again the little girl's eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, we'll find him," said Bunny.

But that was easier said than done. All about the house and barns in the farmyard, down through the meadows and over the pasture they looked for Splash. Mother and Grandmother Brown helped search, but Bunny and Sue, with Bunker Blue and Ben Hall, went farther off to look. It was nearly time for supper, but Bunny and Sue did not

want to wash and get clean ready for the meal until they had found Splash.

But Splash, it seemed, was not to tbe found.

"We'll have to ask some of the neighbors if they've seen him," said Bunker. "We'll go down the road a way and ask everyone we meet."

Splash, by this time, was pretty well known at the houses along the road where Grandpa Brown lived, for the dog made friends with everyone, and was fond of children.

But Bunker, Ben, Bunny and Sue had to ask at a number of places before they found anyone who had seen Splash.

"Your dog lost; eh?" exclaimed Mr. Black, who lived about a mile from Grandpa Brown's house. "Why, yes, I saw Splash this morning. He was running over the fields back of my house. I called to him, thinking you children might be with him, and there's an old ram, over in my back pasture, that I didn't want to get after you.

"But Splash wouldn't come when I called to him, and when I saw you two youngsters weren't with him, I didn't worry about the

ram. I knew Splash could look out for himself."

"Did you see him come back?" asked Bunker.

"No. I didn't notice. I was too busy."

"Then we'll go over and look for him," said Ben. "Maybe the old ram got him after all."

"Well, maybe he did," said the farmer, "but I guess a dog like Splash can run faster than a ram. Anyhow we'll have a look."

"Are you going, Bunny?" asked Sue.

"Sure. Aren't you? Don't you want to find Splash?"

"Yes—but—but I don't want a old ram to hook me with his horns."

"I'll take care of you, Sue," said Farmer Black. "I'll take a big stick with me, and the ram is afraid of that. We'll find Splash for you."

They all went over the field where Mr. Black had seen Splash trotting early that morning. They saw the ram, who, at first, seemed about to run toward them. But when Mr. Black shook the stick at him the ram turned away and nibbled grass.

"No sign of Splash here," said the farmer, as he stood on the fence and looked across the field.

"Then he's just lost," said Bunny. "He was glad the ram had not hurt his dog. But where could Splash be?

They went on a little farther, and Sue called:

"Splash! Splash! Where are you?"

But there was no answer. Then they went on a little farther, and Bunny called:

"Splash! Ho, Splash!"

Hark! What was that?

They all listened.

From somewhere, a good way off, the faint barking of a dog could be heard.

"There he is!" cried Bunker Blue. "That's Splash!"

"Oh, I'm so glad!" cried Sue.

"But why doesn't he come to us?" Bunny asked. "Splash always comes when you call him. Why doesn't he come?"

No one could answer this. They listened and waited. They could hear the dog barking, but the sound was as far off as ever.

"Maybe he can't come," said Ben. "Maybe he's caught, or hurt, and can't walk. We'll have to go to him."

"I guess that's right," said Farmer Black. "We'll find that dog of yours after all."

They listened in order to tell where the barking came from, and then started off toward a little grove of trees. It seemed that Splash was there. And, as they came nearer the barking sounded more plainly.

"Oh, Splash! Splash!" cried Sue.

The dog barked and whined now.

"He's hurt!" said Bunker Blue. "He must be caught in a trap!"

And it was there they found poor Splash.

He had stepped with one paw into a trap that was hidden under the leaves, and there he was, held fast. For the trap, which was a string spring one, was fastened by a chain to a heavy log. And as Splash could not pull the log and trap too, he had had to stay where he was caught.

"Oh, you poor, dear Splash!" cried Sue, putting her arms around the dog's neck. Splash licked her face with his red tongue,

and whined. Bunny, too, put his arms around his pet.

"Some boy must have set that trap here to catch musk rats," said Farmer Black. "I've told 'em not to, but they won't mind. Let me see now if I can't set Splash loose."

This was soon done. The trap was not a sharp one, with teeth, as some are made, and though one of the dog's paws was pinched and bruised, no bones were broken, nor was the skin cut. But poor Splash was quite lame, and could only walk on three legs.

"Splash, what made you run away from home?" asked Bunny.

Of course the dog could not answer. But he may have found some other dog to play with, and run off to have some fun. Then he had stepped into the trap, and there he was held until his little friends came to find him.

"And it's a good thing you looked for him," said Bunker Blue, "or he might have been out here all night, caught in the trap."

"Poor Splash!" said Sue, as she hugged him again.

As Splash could not walk along very well,

on three legs, Mr. Black said he would hitch up a wagon and take the dog, and everyone else, to grandpa's place. And, a little later, this was done.

Grandpa Brown put some liniment on the sore leg, and bound it up in soft cloths. Then Splash went to sleep in the kitchen.

"Oh, I'm so glad he isn't lost!" sighed Sue, as she and Bunny went to bed that night.

"So am I," echoed her brother.

For several days Splash had to go about on three legs, holding the lame one, with the cloth on, up in the air. Then the pain and bruise of the trap passed away, and he could run around the same as before, on four legs, though he limped a little. Soon he was over that, and as well as ever.

"And you must keep out of traps," said Bunny, shaking a finger at his pet.

"Bow-wow!" barked Splash, and I guess that he meant he would.

It was about a week after this that Bunny Brown and his sister Sue saw Bunker Blue and Ben Hall out in a field with a big pile of white cloth.

"Oh, maybe they're going to send up a balloon!" exclaimed Bunny, for he had once seen this done at a park.

"Let's go watch!" cried Sue.

They found the two big boys stretching out the white cloth, to which was fastened many ropes.

"Is it a balloon?" asked Bunny.

"No," answered Bunker. "It's a tent."

"A tent! What a big one!"

"It's the army tent your grandfather used to sleep in when he went to camp. He let us take it. We're going to put it up and see how many it will hold."

"What for?" Bunny wanted to know. "Are you going camping? Can Sue and I come?"

"No, we're not going camping," answered Ben. "But we want this tent, and perhaps another one, bigger, for the circus we are going to give."

"Oh, are you going to have a circus?" asked Bunny.

"Well, we big boys are thinking of it," said Bunker. "You young ones gave such a good one, that we want to see if we can't come

up to you. That's why we're going to put up this tent."

"We'll help," said Bunny. Then he and Sue began pulling on ropes and hauling on the ends of the white canvas, of which the tent was made. The children thought they were helping, but I guess Bunker and Ben could have done better if left alone. Still they liked the children, and did not want to send them away.

But Bunny, who had gone away from Sue, soon grew tired of pulling on the heavy ropes.

"I guess I'll come back when you have the tent up," said the little fellow. "Come on, Sue," and he looked around for his sister.

But she was not in sight.

"Sue! Sue!" called Bunny. "Where are you?"

"Maybe she's gone home," said Ben.

"No, she wouldn't go without me," Bunny declared. "Oh, maybe she's lost; or caught in a trap, just like Splash was!" and Bunny began to cry.

CHAPTER XVII

BUNNY AND THE BALLOONS

BUNKER BLUE, Ben, and some of the large boys from nearby farms, who had been invited to come over and help put up the big tent, stopped pulling on the ropes, or driving in stakes, and gathered around Bunny Brown.

"What's the matter?" asked one big boy, who had a snub nose.

"My—my little sister is lost," Bunny explained, half crying.

"Who is your sister?" the big boy asked. He came from a farm a good way off, and was somewhat of a stranger.

"She's Sue—that's my sister," Bunny explained. "She was here a little while ago, but now she's lost!"

"This is Bunny Brown," explained Bunker to the other boys. "He and his sister Sue are staying at Grandpa Brown's farm. Their grandfather let us take this tent," he said.

"Oh, I see!" exclaimed the big boy. "Well, we'll help you hunt for your sister, Bunny."

They began looking all around the big tent, which was spread out on the ground and not yet up on the poles, as it would be later, so the people could come in it to see the show of the big boys. But Sue was not in sight. Nor could she be seen anywhere in the field where the tent was to be put up.

"Are you sure she didn't go back to the house, Bunny?" asked Ben.

"I'm sure she didn't," said the little boy. "She was here with me a little while ago. If she'd gone she'd have told me so, and Splash would have gone with her. He goes with her more than he does with me. And see, here is Splash!"

This was true. The big dog lay in the shade, watching what Bunny and the others were doing, and wondering, I suppose, why people were so foolish as to work in hot weather, when they could just as well lie down in the shade, and stick out their tongues to keep cool —for that is what dogs do.

"Maybe Splash can find Sue," said Bunker.

"Hi there, Splash!" he called. "Where's Sue? Find her!"

Splash jumped up with a bark, and ran to Bunny.

"You tell him what to do," said Bunker. "He'll mind you better than he will me."

"Find Sue, Splash! Find Sue!" said Bunny.

Splash barked again, looked up into Bunny's face, as if to make sure what was wanted, and then, with a bark he ran to where a big pile of the white canvas was gathered in a heap. It was a part of the tent the boys had not yet unfolded, or straightened out.

Splash stood near this and barked. Then he began poking in it with his sharp nose.

"He—he's found something," said Ben.

"Maybe it's Sue," cried Bunker. "Come on!"

Taking hold of Bunny's hand, Bunker ran with him toward the pile of canvas. The other boys ran too. But before they got there Sue was sitting up in the middle of it, and Splash was standing near her, barking and jumping about now and then, as if he felt very happy.

"Why—why, Sue!" Bunny cried. "Were you there all the while?"

"How long is all the while?" asked Sue, rubbing her sleepy eyes. "I was playing house here, Bunny, and I pulled a bed spread over me, and went to sleep. Splash put his cold nose on me and woke me up. What are you all lookin' at me for?" Sue asked, as she saw the circle of boys, her brother among them, staring at her.

"We—we thought you were lost, Sue," said Bunny. "And we came to find you."

"I—I wasn't losted at all!" Sue protested. "I was here all the while! I just went to sleep!"

And that was what had happened. When Bunny was busy helping Ben and Bunker pull on some of the tent ropes, Sue had slipped off by herself, and had lain down on the pile of canvas.

Feeling sleepy, she had pulled a part of the tent over her. She made believe it was a white spread, such as was on her bed in her Grandpa Brown's house. This covered Sue from sight, so Bunny and none of the others could see her.

And there she had slept, while the others looked. And had not Splash known where to find the little girl, she might have slept a great deal longer, and Bunny and the boys might not have found her until dark.

"But I've slept long enough, now," said Sue. "Is the tent ready for the big circus?"

"Not yet," answered Bunker Blue. "We've got to use the piece of canvas you were sleeping on, so it's a good thing you woke up. But we'll soon have the tent ready, and then we'll go and get the bigger one."

"Oh, are you going to have two?" asked Sue.

"Yes," answered Ben. "Oh, we're going to give a fine show! And we want you and your sister Sue in it, too, Bunny," went on the strange boy who had come to Grandpa Brown's so hungry that night. "You'll be in the big circus; won't you?"

"To give the Punch and Judy show?" asked Sue.

"Well, maybe that, and maybe some of the things you did in your own little circus," Bunker said. "There's time enough to get up something new if you want."

"All right. That's what we'll do," said Bunny. "Come on, Sue, and we'll practise a new act for the big boys' circus."

The little circus, gotten up by Bunny and Sue, had made quite a jolly time for the people in the country where Grandpa Brown lived. It was talked of in many a farmhouse, and it was this talk of the little circus that had made Bunker, Ben and the other big boys want to give a larger show of their own.

Some of the boys were quite strong, and they could do tricks on the trapeze that Bunny and his little friends did not dare try. Then, too, one of the boys had a trained dog, that had once been in a real city theatre show, and another had some white mice that could do little tricks, and even fire a toy cannon that shot a paper cap.

"Oh, it's going to be a real circus all right, in real tents," said Bunker Blue.

As I have told you, Grandpa Brown let the boys take his old army tent, and they were to have another, and larger one, that had once been used at a county fair.

Leaving Bunker, Ben and the other big boys

to put up their tent, Bunny and Sue, with Splash, their dog, went back to the farmhouse.

"What trick can we do, Bunny?" asked Sue. "What can we do in the circus?"

"Oh, we'll make up a surprise, so they'll all laugh," he said. "I wish I had another big lobster claw, so I could put it on my nose, and look funny."

"Maybe you could find something else to put on your nose," said the little girl. "Oh, Bunny, I know!" she suddenly cried. "I've just thought of something fine!"

"What?" asked Bunny.

Sue looked all around, to make sure no one was listening, and then she whispered to Bunny. And what it was she told him I'm not allowed to tell you just now, though I will when the right time comes.

Anyhow, Bunny and Sue were very busy the rest of the day. They were making something out in the barn, and they kept the doors closed so no one could see what they were doing.

It was the day after this that Bunny and Sue were asked by their grandma to go on a

little errand for her. It was about half a mile down the safe country road, to a neighbor's house, and as the two children had been there before, they knew the way very well.

Hand in hand they set off, with Splash following after them. They walked slowly, for there was no hurry. Now and then they stopped to pick some pretty flowers, or get a drink at a wayside spring. Once in a while they saw a red, yellow or blue bird, and they stopped to watch the pretty creatures fly to their nests, where their little ones were waiting to be fed.

"Oh, isn't it just lovely in the country," said Sue. "Don't you just love it, Bunny?"

"Yes," he answered. "I do. And won't we have fun at our circus, Sue, when I dress up like a——"

"Hush!" exclaimed the little girl. "Don't tell anyone! It's a secret you know."

"Pooh! There's nobody here to tell!" laughed Bunny.

In a little while they were at the house of the neighbor to whom Grandma Brown had sent them. They gave in the little note

grandma had written, and then Mrs. Wilson, to whom it was sent, after writing an answer, gave Bunny and Sue each a cookie, and a cool glass of milk.

"Sit down in the shade, on the porch, and eat and drink," said Mrs. Wilson. "Then you will feel better when going home."

Bunny and Sue liked the cookies and milk very much. They were just eating the last crumbs of the cookies, and drinking the last drops of milk, when Bunny, looking out toward the road, saw, going past, a man with a large number of balloons, tied to strings, floating over his head. There were red balloons, and blue ones; green, yellow, purple, white and pink ones.

"Oh, look, Sue!" cried Bunny. "The balloons! That's just what we want for our circus."

"What do we want of balloons?" asked the little girl.

"I mean we ought to have somebody sell them outside the tents," Bunny went on. "It won't look like a real circus without toy balloons."

"That's so," agreed Sue. "But how can we get 'em?"

"We'll ask the balloon man," said Bunny. He was not a bit bashful about speaking to strangers.

Setting down his empty milk glass, Bunny ran down the front path toward the road, where the balloon man was walking along through the dust. Sue ran after her brother.

"Hey! Hi there!" called Bunny.

The man stopped and turned around. Seeing the two children, he smiled.

"You wanta de balloon?" he asked, for he was an Italian, just like the one who had a hand organ, and whose monkey ran away, as I have told you in the book before this one.

"We want lots of balloons," said Bunny.

"Oh, sure!" said the man, smiling more than ever.

"We want all the balloons for our circus," Bunny explained.

"Circus? Circus?" repeated the balloon man, and he did not seem to know what Bunny meant. "What is circus?" he asked.

"We're going to have a circus," Bunny ex-

plained. "My sister Sue says we must have toy balloons. You come to our circus and you can sell a lot. You know—a show in a tent."

"Oh, sure! I know!" The Italian smiled again. He had often sold balloons at fairs and circuses. "Where your circus?" he asked.

"Come on, we'll show you," promised Bunny. Then he and Sue started back toward Grandpa Brown's house, followed by the man with the balloons floating over his head—red balloons, green, blue, purple, yellow, white and pink ones.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE STORM

"BUNNY! Won't it be just grand!" whispered Sue to her brother, as they walked along ahead of the balloon man.

"Fine!" said Bunny. "We'll have him stand outside the tent, and sell his balloons. It'll look just like a real circus then. It wouldn't without the balloons; would it, Sue?"

"No. And, oh, Bunny! I've thought of something else."

"What is it?"

"Pink lemonade."

"Pink lemonade?"

"Yes, we'll have the balloon man sell that, and peanuts. Then it will be more than ever like a real circus."

"But how can he sell pink lemonade and peanuts and balloons?" Bunny wanted to know.

"Oh, he can do it," said Sue, who seemed to think it was very easy. "He can tie his bunch of balloons to the lemonade and peanut stand, and when anybody wants one they can take it and put down the five cents. Then the balloon man will have one hand to dish out the hot peanuts, and the other to pour out the pink lemonade."

"Yes, I guess he could do that," said Bunny. "We'll ask him, anyhow. Maybe he won't want to."

Bunny and Sue stopped and waited for the balloon man to catch up with them. The man, seeing the children waiting for him, hurried forward, and stopped to see what was wanted.

"Well?" he asked, looking at his balloons to make sure none of them would break away, and float up to the clouds.

"Can you sell pink lemonade?" asked Bunny.

"Penk leemonade," repeated the Italian, saying the words in a funny way. "Whata you calla dat? Penk leemonade?"

"You know—what they always have at a circus," said Bunny. "This color," and he

pointed to a pink balloon. "You drink it you know, out of a glass—five cents."

"No can drinka de balloon!" the man exclaimed. "You put your teeth on heem and he go—pop! so—no good!"

"No, I don't mean that!" cried Bunny, laughing at the Italian, who made funny faces, and waved his hands in the air. "I mean can you sell pink lemonade—to drink—at our circus?"

"And peanuts?" added Sue.

"Yes, we'd want you to sell peanuts, too," went on the little boy.

"Ha! Peanuts? No! I used to pusha de peanut cart—make de whistle blow—hot peanuts. No more! I sella de balloon!" exclaimed the Italian. "No more makea de hot peanuts!"

"Oh, dear!" sighed Sue. "He won't do it! We'll have to get some one else, Bunny."

"Well, we can easy do that," said Bunny. "Maybe the hired man will sell peanuts and lemonade for us. I asked him if he would like to be in the big circus, and he said he would. I asked him if he could do any acts."

"What'd he say?" Sue wanted to know, while the Italian balloon peddler stood looking at the two children, as if wondering what they would do next.

"Well, the hired man said all he could do was milk a cow, and plow up the ground. He wanted to know if they were circus acts, and I said I guessed not," replied Bunny. "So maybe he'd be glad to sell lemonade and peanuts."

"I think he would," said Sue. "You needn't do anything except blow up your balloons and sell 'em," she went on to the Italian. "Never mind about the peanuts and the pink lemonade."

"Alla right," said the man, with a smile that showed what nice white teeth he had. "Me sella de balloon!"

He and the children walked on a little longer. Then the man turned to Bunny and asked:

"How much farder now—to de circus?"

"Not far now," said Bunny. "The circus isn't quite ready yet, but you can stay at our grandpa's house until it is. You see we don't

get many balloon peddlers out this way. You're the first one we've seen, so you'd better stay. It won't be more than a week, or maybe two weeks."

"Circus last all dat time?" asked the Italian. "Sella lot de balloons. Buy more in New York—sella dem! Mucha de money!"

"We've an aunt in New York," said Sue. "Her name is Aunt Lu. If you sell all these balloons she'll buy some more for you in New York, so you won't have to go away."

"Yes," said Bunny, "that would be best. We'll get Aunt Lu to send you more balloons. And when you haven't any to sell, while you're waiting, you could help the hired man sell pink lemonade and peanuts. 'Cause, anyhow, maybe the hired man sometimes would have to go to milk the cows, and you could take his place."

The Italian shook his head. He did not quite know what Bunny and Sue were talking about. All he thought of was that he was being taken to a circus, where he might sell all his balloons, and make money enough to buy more to sell.

"There's grandpa's house now," said Sue, as they went around a turn in the road.

"Where de circus—where de tents?" the Italian wanted to know.

"Oh, they're not all up yet," said Bunny. "The big boys are doing that. You just come with us."

And so Bunny Brown and his sister Sue walked up the front path, followed by the Italian with the many-colored balloons floating over his head.

"Mercy me! What's all this?" cried Mother Brown, when she saw the little procession. "What does this mean, Bunny—Sue?"

"It's balloons, for the circus," explained Bunny. "We saw this man down the road, and we invited him to come with us. He's going to stay here until it's time for the circus, next week, and then he's going to sell balloons outside the tent."

"We wanted him to sell pink lemonade and peanuts," said Sue, "but he wouldn't. So the hired man can do that. Now, Grandma," went on the little girl, "maybe this balloon

man is hungry. We're not, 'cause we had some cookies and milk; didn't we, Bunny?"

"Yep."

"But he didn't have any," Sue went on. "And he'll have to have a place to sleep, 'cause he's going to stay to the circus, and sell balloons. And if he sells them all Aunt Lu will send him more from New York and he can sell them. Won't it be nice, Mother?"

Mrs. Brown did not know what to say. Neither did Grandma Brown. They just looked at one another, and then at the Italian, and next at Bunny and Sue.

"Me sella de balloon!" explained the Italian, as best he could in his queer English. "Little boy—little gal—say circus. Me likea de circus. But me no see any tents. Where circus tents?"

"Oh these children!" cried Mrs. Brown. "What in the world are we to do with this Italian and his balloons?"

"Me sella de balloons!" said the dark-skinned man.

"Yes, I know," sighed Mrs. Brown. "But the circus is only a make-believe one, and it

isn't ready yet, and—Oh, I don't know what to do!" she cried. "Bunny—Sue—you shouldn't have invited the balloon man to come here!"

"But you can't have a circus without balloons," said Bunny.

"Yes, my dear, I know, but——"

"What's all the trouble?" asked Papa Brown, coming out on the porch just then.

Bunny and Sue, their mother and the Italian, told the story after a while.

"Well," said Mr. Brown, to the Italian, after he had listened carefully, "I'm sorry you had your trip for nothing. But of course the children did not know any better. It is only a little circus, and you would not sell many balloons. But, as long as you came away back here, I guess we can give you something to eat, and we'll buy some balloons of you for the children."

"Thanka you. Mucha de 'bliged," said the Italian with a smile.

He seemed happy now, and after Grandma Brown had given him some bread and meat, and a big piece of pie, out on the side porch,

he started off down the road again, smiling and happy. Bunny and Sue were each given a balloon by their father, who bought them from the Italian.

"And don't invite any more peddlers to your circus, children," said Mr. Brown.

"We won't," promised Bunny. "But we thought the balloons would be nice."

"We can have the hired man sell pink lemonade and peanuts; can't we?" Sue wanted to know.

"Yes, I guess so—if he wants to," laughed Grandpa Brown.

"Well, we have some balloons ourselves, anyhow," said Bunny to his sister that night.

The children had much fun with their balloons next day. They tied long threads to them, and let them float high in the air. Once Sue's nearly got away, but Bunny ran after the thread, which was dragging on the ground, and caught it.

The big boys had not forgotten about the circus, all this while. Bunker, Ben and their friends had put up the tent Grandpa Brown let them take, and Bunny and Sue went inside.

"My! It's terrible big!" said Sue, looking about the white canvas house. It was not so very large, but it seemed so to Sue.

"Just wait until you see the other," said Bunker. "The fair tent is three times as big as this."

And so it was. When that was put up in the meadow, near the army tent of Grandpa Brown's, the place began to look like a real circus ground.

"When are you going to have the show?" asked Bunny of Ben.

"Oh, in a few days now. Have you and Sue made up what you are going to do?"

"Yes, but it's a secret," Sue answered.

"So much the better!" laughed Ben. "You'll surprise the people."

The two tents were put up, and the big boys were getting ready for the circus. One night, about four days before it was to be held, Bunker Blue and Ben came in from where they had been, down near the tents, and looked anxiously at the sky.

"What's the matter," asked Bunny.

"Well," said Bunker, "it looks as if we

would have a big rain storm. And if we do, and the meadow brook gets too full of water, it may wash the tents away."

"Oh, I guess that won't happen," said Ben.

But in the night it began to rain very hard. It thundered and lightened, and Bunny and Sue woke up, frightened. Sue began to cry.

"Why, you mustn't cry just because it rains," said Mother Brown.

"But I'm afraid!" sobbed Sue. "And it will wash away our circus tents!" and she sat up in bed, and shivered every time it thundered. "Oh, Mother! It will wash away all the nice circus tents!"

CHAPTER XIX

HARD WORK

MRS. BROWN did not quite understand what Sue said about the storm washing away the circus tents. So she asked the little girl to explain.

"Why, Bunker Blue said," Sue told her mother, "that if the storm was too hard, the brook would get full of water, and wash away our circus tents. And I don't want that, 'cause me and Bunny is going to do an act, only it's a secret and I can't tell you. Only—Oh, dear!" cried Sue, as she saw a very bright flash of lightning. "It's going to bang again!"

"But you musn't be afraid of the storm," said Mother Brown. "See, Bunny isn't afraid!"

"Yes, I *is* afraid too!" cried the little boy, who slept in the next room. "I *is* afraid, but I wasn't goin' to tell!"

"Well, that's being brave—not to show that you are afraid," said Mother Brown. "Come now, Sue, you be brave, like Bunny."

"But I can't, Mother! I don't want the circus to be spoiled!"

"Oh, I guess the tents are good and strong," said Mr. Brown, who had gotten up to see what Sue was crying for. "They won't blow away."

It was about eleven o'clock at night, and quite dark, except when the lightning came. Then the loud thunder would sound, "just like circus wagons rumbling over a bridge," as Bunny told Sue, to try and make his little sister feel less afraid.

But all Sue could talk of was the circus tents, that might be blown over by the strong wind, which was now rattling the shutters and windows of the farmhouse. Or else the white canvas houses might be washed away by the high water.

While Mr. and Mrs. Brown sat up, trying to comfort Sue, by telling her and Bunny a fairy story, there were sounds heard in another part of the house.

"I guess that's Grandpa Brown getting up to see if his cows and horses are all right," said mother. "The cows and horses are not afraid in a storm, Sue."

"Maybe they are, but they can't talk and tell us about it," said Sue, who was not quite so frightened now.

Grandpa Brown could be heard speaking to some one in the hall.

"Hello, Bunker Blue," he called, "is that you getting up?"

"Yes, Mr. Brown," was the answer the children heard.

"And who is that with you?"

"Ben Hall."

"What are you going to do?" Bunny Brown heard his grandpa ask.

"We're going down to see about our circus tents," said Bunker. "We're afraid they may be carried away in the storm."

"Well, perhaps they may," said Grandpa Brown. "It's a bad storm all right, but we'll be safe and comfortable in the house. Take a lantern with you, if you're going out, and be careful."

"We will," promised Bunker.

Bunny put on his slippers and bath robe and went to the bedroom door. It was open a little way, and out in the hall he could see Bunker Blue and Ben Hall. The two big boys had on rubber boots and rubber coats, for it was raining hard.

"Oh, Bunker!" called Bunny. "May I go with you?"

"What, little shaver! Are you awake?" Bunker asked. "You'd better get back to bed. It's raining cats and dogs!"

"Really?" called Sue, from her father's lap, where she was sitting all "cuddled up." "Is it really raining cats and dogs? Is it raining my dog Splash? If it is I want to see it!"

"No, I didn't exactly mean that," answered Bunker with a laugh. "I meant it was raining such big drops that they are almost as large as little baby cats and dogs. But it is storming too hard for you two youngsters to come out. Ben and I will see about the tents."

"Don't let them blow away!" begged Bunny.

"Or wash down the brook," added Sue.

"We won't!" promised the big boys.

Then they went out into the storm. The wind was blowing so hard they could not carry umbrellas, for if they had taken them the umbrellas would have been blown inside out in a minute. But with rubber hats, coats and boots Bunker and Ben could not get very wet.

Bunny and Sue, looking from their windows, saw the flicker of the lantern, as Bunker and Ben walked with it toward the circus tents.

Harder rumbled the thunder, and brighter flashed the lightning. The rain pounded on the roof as though it would punch holes in it, and come through to wet Bunny and Sue. But nothing like that happened, and soon the two children began to feel sleepy again, even though the storm still kept up.

"I—I guess I'll go to bed," said Sue. "Will you stay by me a little while, Daddy?"

"Yes," answered her father. "I'll sit right by your little bed."

"And hold my hand until I get to sleep?"

"Yes, I'll hold your hand, Sue."

"All right. Then I won't be scared any more. You can hold Bunny's hand, Mother."

"Pooh, I'm not afraid!" said Bunny. "But I like you to hold my hand, Mother!" he added quickly, for fear his mother would go away and leave him.

"All right, I'll sit by you," she said, with a smile.

Bunny and Sue soon fell asleep again. The thunder was not quite so loud, nor the lightning so bright, but it rained harder than ever, and as Bunny felt his eyes growing heavy, so that he was almost asleep, he again thought of what might happen to the circus tents.

"If they wash away down the brook, we can't have any show," he thought. "But maybe it won't happen."

Bunny roused up a little later, when some one came into the farmhouse. The little boy thought it was Bunker and Ben, but he was too sleepy to get up and ask. He heard some one, that sounded like his grandpa, ask:

"Did they wash away?"

Then Bunker's voice answered:

"Yes, they both washed away. It's a regular flood down in the meadow. Everything is spoiled!"

"I wonder—I wonder if he means the circus?" thought Bunny, but he was too sleepy to do anything more, just then, than wonder.

In the morning, however, when the storm had passed, Bunny Brown and his sister Sue heard some bad news. After breakfast Bunker and Ben came in and Bunker said:

"Well, little folks, I guess we can't have any circus!"

"No circus!" cried Bunny, and he was so surprised that he dropped his fork with a clatter on his plate, waking up Splash, the big dog, who was asleep in one corner of the room.

"Why can't we have a circus?" asked Sue. She and Bunny had almost forgotten about the storm the night before.

"We can't have a circus," explained Bunker, "because both our tents were washed away during the night. The brook, that is generally so small that you can wade across it, was so filled with rain water that it was almost turned into a river. It flooded the meadow, the water washed out the tent poles and pegs, and down the tents fell, flat. Then the water rose higher and washed them away."

"Where did it wash them?" asked Bunny.

"Oh, away down toward the river, I guess. I'm afraid we'll never get 'em back."

"It's too bad," said Ben. "Just when we were all ready for the nice circus. But, Bunker, we won't give up yet. We'll look for those tents, and maybe we can put them up again."

"Well, maybe we can do it," said the red-haired boy. "But I'm afraid everything is spoiled."

"We'll help you look for the tents," said Bunny. "Won't we, Sue?"

"If—if the water isn't too deep," said Sue. She was always afraid of deep water, though she, like Bunny, was learning to swim.

"Oh, the water isn't deep now," Bunker assured her. "It was a regular flood in the night when Ben and I went out to look at it, but it has all gone down now, since the rain stopped."

"Was it deep when you were out last night?" Bunny wanted to know.

"It surely was," answered Bunker. "It was almost over our boots. We couldn't get near

the tents, and we had to watch them be knocked down by the flood, and carried away on the big waves. Then we came back to the house."

"We couldn't do anything in the dark, anyhow," remarked Ben. "But now that it's daylight maybe we can find the tents."

"We'll help—come on!" exclaimed Bunny to his sister.

They finished their breakfast, and, after promising to keep out of mischief, Bunny and Sue were allowed to go with Bunker and Ben to look for the missing tents.

First they went down to the meadow where the white canvas houses had been first put up. The brook was higher than Bunny or Sue had ever seen it before, and the bent-over, twisted and muddy grass showed how high up in the meadow the water had come. There were some wooden pegs still left in the ground, to show where the tents had stood.

"And now they're gone," said Bunny sadly.

"Yes. Carried away in the flood," remarked Bunker.

"But maybe we'll find them," said Ben hopefully.

They walked along the bank of the brook. About a mile farther on it flowed into a small river.

"And if our tents have floated down the river we may never get them back," said Bunker. "Now everybody look, and whoever first sees the white tents, caught on a stone or on a log, tell us, and we'll try to get them," said Bunker.

You may be sure Bunny and Sue kept their eyes wide open, and were very desirous to be the first to see the tents. It was Sue who had the first good look.

As she and Bunny, with Ben, Bunker and some other big boys who had come to help, went around a turn in the brook, Sue, who had run on ahead, saw something white bobbing up and down in the water.

"Oh, there's a tent—maybe!" she cried.

The others ran to her side.

"So it is!" shouted Bunker. "That's the small tent, caught fast on a rock in the brook. We'll get that out first!"

He and the other boys took off their shoes and stockings, and waded out to the tent. It was hard work to get it to shore, but they

finally managed to do it. The tent was wet and muddy, and torn in two places, but it could be dried out, mended and used.

"And now for the big tent—see if *you* can find that, Bunny!" called Ben.

But Bunny was not as lucky as was his sister Sue. After they had walked on half a mile farther, it was Bunker himself who saw the big tent, caught on a sunken tree, just where the brook flowed into the river.

"Now if we get that we'll be all right," he said.

"Yes, but it isn't going to be as easy to get that as it was the little one," commented Ben Hall. "We'll have to work very hard to get that tent to shore."

"I'll help," offered Bunny Brown, and the other boys laughed. Bunny was so little to offer to help get the big tent on shore.

CHAPTER XX

THE MISSING MICE

THE big tent, once used at the fair, but which the boys had now borrowed for their circus, was all tangled up in the water. The ropes and cloth were twisted and wound around among the sticks and stones, where the tent had drifted, after the flood of the night before had carried it away.

"Oh, we'll never get that out so we can use it," said Charlie Tenny, one of the boys who was helping Ben, Bunker and the others.

"Yes, we'll get it out," said Ben. "We've got Bunny Brown to help us you know."

Some of the boys laughed, and Bunny's face grew red.

"Now I mean just what I say!" cried Ben. "Bunny Brown is a brave little chap, and if it hadn't been for him and his sister Sue we big fellows wouldn't have thought of getting up

a circus show. So it's a good thing to have a chap like him with us, even if he is small."

Bunny felt better after this, and he thought Ben was very kind to speak as he had done.

"Splash is here, too," said Bunny. "He can get hold of a rope and pull like anything."

"That's right," said Bunker Blue. "Maybe Splash can help us. He is a strong dog."

"It's a good thing the tent didn't go all the way down to the river," said Charlie. "Otherwise we might never have found it."

"Yes," put in Bunker. "And now let's see if we can get it to shore. It's not going to be easy."

The boys worked hard, and Bunny helped. He could wade out, where the water was not too deep, and pull on the ropes. There were a great many of these ropes to hold the tent together, but now they were all tangled.

But Ben Hall seemed to know how to untangle them, and soon the work of getting the tent to shore began to look easier. Splash did his share of work, too. He pulled on the ropes Bunker Blue handed him, shutting his strong, white teeth on them, and straining and

tugging until you would have thought that Splash, all alone, would pull the tent ashore.

And, finally, with all the boys and the dog and Bunny Brown pulling and tugging, they got the tent out of the water. It was still all twisted and tangled, but now that it was on shore it was easier to make smooth.

"We'll have to get a wagon to haul it back to the meadow where we are going to set it up again," said Bunker.

"My grandpa will let us take a horse and wagon," said Bunny. "He wants to see the circus."

"I guess we'll have to give him a free ticket if he lets us take a horse and wagon to haul the tent," said Ben with a laugh. "You've a good grandpa, Bunny Brown."

"Yep. I like him, and so does Sue," said the little fellow.

Grandpa Brown very kindly said he would go down to the river himself, in his wagon, and help the boys bring up the tent. He did this, and he also helped them set it up again. This time they put the two circus tents farther back from the brook.

"Then if it rains again, and the water gets high and makes a flood, it won't wash away the tents," said Bunker Blue.

"When is the show going to be?" asked Sue. She was anxious to see it, and she and Bunny were waiting for the time when they could let their secret become known. For they had told no one yet.

"Oh, we'll have to wait a few days now, before having the circus," said Ben. "The tents are all wet, and we want them to dry out. Then we've got to make the seats all over again, because the flood carried them away. I guess we can't have the show until next week."

There was much more work to be done because the flood had come and spoiled everything. But, after all, it did not matter much, and the boys set to work with jolly laughs to get the circus ready again.

Bunny and Sue helped all they could, and the older boys were glad to have the children with them, because both Bunny and Sue were so good-natured, and said such funny things, at times, that it made the others laugh.

The seats for the circus were made of boards, laid across boxes, just as Bunny and Sue had made theirs when they gave their first Punch and Judy show in their barn at home.

There were seats all around the outer edge inside the big fair tent. It was in this one that the real "show" was to be given. Here the big boys would swing on trapezes, have foot and wheelbarrow races, ride horses and do all sorts of tricks.

"The people will sit here and watch us do our funny things," said Ben. "We're going to have clowns, and everything."

"And what's going to be in the little tent—the army one grandpa let you take?" asked Bunny.

"Oh, that's for the wild animals," said Bunker Blue.

"Are you going to have our dog Splash striped like a blue tiger again?" asked Sue.

"No, I think we'll have some different wild animals this time," said Ben. "There'll be some surprises at our show."

"Oh, I wish it were time now!" cried Sue.

"We've got a surprise too; haven't we, Bunny?"

"Yep!" answered her brother. "Come on out to the barn, Sue and we'll practise it again."

What it was Bunny and Sue were going to do, none of the big boys could guess. And they did not try very hard, for they had too much to do themselves, getting ready for the "big" circus as they called it, for the first one, gotten up by Bunny and Sue, was only a little one.

So the smaller tent was made ready for the "wild" animals, though of course there would really be no elephants, tigers or anything like that. You couldn't have them in a boys' circus, and I guess the boys didn't really want them. "Make-believe" was as much fun to them as it was to Bunny and Sue.

There was nice, clear weather after the storm and flood, and soon the circus tents were dried out again. The boards were once more put across the boxes for seats.

One day Bunker and Ben went into the big tent. There they saw Bunny and Sue tying

some pieces of old carpet on to some of the planks down near the front sawdust ring. For there was a real sawdust ring, the sawdust having come from grandpa's ice-house.

"What are you putting carpet on the planks for?" asked Ben, of the two children.

"To make preserved seats," answered Sue.

"Reserved seats, Sue. *Re*served—not *pre*served seats, Sue," corrected Bunny.

"Well, it's just the same, 'most," said Sue, as she went on tying her bit of carpet to a board. "We're making some nice, soft reserved seats for grandpa and grandma, and mother and daddy."

"Oh, I see!" laughed Bunker. "That's a good idea. We can make soft seats for the ladies, Ben. We'll get some more pieces of old carpet and have a lot of reserved seats."

And this the big boys did. Bunny and Sue, little as they were, had given them a good idea.

And now began the real work of getting ready for the circus. That is the boys began taking into the smaller tent queer looking boxes and crates. These boxes and crates were

covered with cloth or paper, so no one could see what was in them.

"What are they?" asked Sue, as she and Bunny stood outside the smaller tent, for Bunker would not let them go inside.

"Oh, those are some of the wild animals," said the red-haired boy.

"Really?" asked Sue, her eyes opening wide.

"Well — really-make-believe," laughed Bunker.

"And are the white mice there?" asked Bunny.

"Yes, the white mice are in the tent," said Bunker.

One of the country boys, who had a lot of white mice had promised to lend them to the circus. He had taught them to do some little tricks, and this was to be a part of the show.

"Oh, I can hardly wait!" cried Sue. "I want to see the circus."

"Well you can now, in a day or so," said Bunker. "Hi there! What have you?" he asked of a boy who came up to the tent with a box on a wheelbarrow.

"This is the wild lion," was the answer.

"Oh-o-o-o-o!" exclaimed Sue, getting closer to Bunny. "A lion!"

"Oh, I've got him well trained," said the boy. "He won't hurt you at all. He won't even roar if I tell him not to."

Certainly the lion in the cage seemed very quiet, and the boy carried him very easily.

"I guess maybe he's a baby lion," whispered Sue to Bunny.

That afternoon there was a great deal of excitement down at the "circus grounds," as Bunny and Sue called the place in the meadow where the tents stood.

One of the boys who had been helping Bunker and Ben, came running out of the tent crying:

"They're gone! They're gone!"

"What's gone?" asked Ben.

"My white mice! The cage door is open and they're all gone!"

CHAPTER XXI

THE BIG CIRCUS

BUNNY BROWN and his sister Sue looked at one another. If the white mice had escaped from the circus tent, some of the other animals might also get away. And suppose that should happen to the lion, which Ben had said was in one of the boxes! Just suppose!

"I—I guess we'd better go home, Bunny," said Sue, in a whisper.

"Yes," he answered. "I—I guess mother wants us. Come on!"

"What's the matter?" asked Bunker Blue. "I thought you were going to stay and help us, Bunny."

"I—I was. But if those mice got away—"

"Oh, I see!" laughed Bunker Blue. "You're afraid some of the other animals might also get out. But don't be afraid. We haven't any of the other wild beasts in here yet."

"But that—that lion," said Bunny, looking toward the animal tent.

"Oh, he's asleep," said Ben. "Besides he wouldn't hurt anyone even if he was out of his cage. You needn't be afraid. He's the only animal, except the mice, that we've put in the tent yet. But how did your mice get out, Sam?" he asked the boy who owned them.

"I don't know. They were all right last night, but, when I went to feed them this morning, the cage door was open, and they were all gone."

"Will—will they bite?" asked Sue.

"No, they're very tame and gentle," answered Sam. "White mice and white rats, you know, aren't like the other kind. I guess being colored white makes them kind and nice. They run all over me, in my pockets and up my sleeves. Sometimes they go to sleep in my pockets.

"Why, even my mother isn't afraid of them, and she'll let them go to sleep in her lap, and she wouldn't do that for a black mouse or a black or gray rat. No sir!"

"No, I guess not!" exclaimed Bunker.

"Other rats and mice would bite. But it's too bad your white ones are gone. We'll have to find them. We can't have a good circus without them. Everybody help hunt for Sam's lost mice!" cried Bunker.

"I—I know how to get them," said Sue.

"How?" Sam wanted to know. He and the others, including Bunny and Sue, had gone inside the tent to look at the empty mouse cage.

"With cheese," answered Sue. "Don't you know the little verse: 'Once a trap was baited, with a piece of cheese. It tickled so a little mouse it almost made him sneeze.' And when your mices sneeze, when they smell the cheese, you could hear them, and catch them, Sam."

"Yes, maybe that would be a good plan," laughed Bunker Blue. "But do your mice like cheese, Sam?"

"Yes, they'll eat almost anything, and they'll take it right out of my hand. Oh dear! I hope they come back!"

Sam felt very bad, for he had had his white mice pets a long time, and had taught them to do many little tricks.

"We'll all help you look for them," said Ben. "Did you ever teach any of them the trick of opening the cage door?" he asked.

"No," replied Sam. "I don't believe they could do that, for the door was fastened on the outside, and white mice haven't paws like a trained monkey. Maybe I didn't fasten the cage door good last night."

"Oh, Bunny!" cried Sue. "Wouldn't it be fun if we could send and get Mr. Winkler's monkey Wango for our circus? Wouldn't it?"

"Yes, maybe it would," replied Bunny. "But I don't guess we could do it. Come on, Sue, I'm going to look for the white mice."

"All right," Sue said. Maybe some little girls would be afraid of mice, white, black or gray. But Sue was not. Perhaps it was because she knew Bunny was going to be with her. Then, too, Sue was very anxious to have the circus as good as it could be made, and if the mice were missing some of the people who came might not like it. So Sue and Bunny said they would help hunt for the lost white mice.

With the big boys, the children looked all around the animal tent. The ground had been covered with straw, and the mice might be hiding in this, or among the boxes and barrels in the tent. But, look as every one did, the mice were not to be found.

"What's in that box?" asked Sue, pointing to one covered with a horse blanket.

"That's the lion," answered Bunker Blue. "But don't be afraid," he went on, as he saw Sue step to one side. "He's asleep now. Besides he can't hurt anyone. You'll see, when we have the circus."

No one knew where the white mice had gone. Even Splash could not find them, though both Bunny and Sue told their dog to look for Sam's pets.

"I guess Splash isn't a rat dog," said Ben.

"No, and I'm glad he isn't," Sam said. "Rat dogs might think white mice were made for them to shake and kill, just as they shake and kill the other kind of rats and mice. I'd rather lose my white mice, and never see them again, than have them killed."

But, even though the white mice were miss-

ing, the circus would go on just the same. And now began a busy time for all the big boys. The show would be given in two more days, and there was much to be done before that time.

Sam and Bunker Blue had painted some signs which they tacked up on Grandpa Brown's barn, as well as on the barns of some of the other farmers. Everybody was invited to come to the circus, and those who wanted to could give a little money to help pay for the hire of the big tent. Many of the farmers and their wives said they would do this.

One by one the animal cages, which were just wooden boxes with wooden slats nailed in front, were brought into the animal tent. They were put around in a circle on the straw which covered the ground.

In the other tent the boys had made a little wooden platform, like a stage. They had put up trapezes and bars, on which they could do all sorts of tricks, such as hanging by their hands, by their heels and even by their chins.

No one except themselves knew what Bunny and his sister Sue were going to do. The

children had kept their secret well. They had asked their grandma for two old bed sheets, and she had let them take the white pieces of cloth. Bunny and Sue were making something in the harness room of the barn, and they kept the door shut so no one could look in.

It was the night before the circus, and Bunny and Sue had gone to bed. They were almost asleep when, in the next room, they heard their mother call:

"Oh, Walter!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown to her husband. "There's something under my bed. I'm sure it's one of the animals from the boys' circus! Do look and see what it is!"

"Oh, it can't be anything," said Mr. Brown. "All the animals are shut up in the tent. Besides, they are only make-believe animals, anyhow."

"Well, I'm sure *something* is under my bed!" said Mrs. Brown. "I heard it move. Please look!"

Mr. Brown looked. Sue and Bunny wondered what it was their papa would find. They heard him say:

"Oh, it's nothing but a piece of white paper. You heard it rattle in the wind. Come and see for yourself."

Bunny and Sue heard their mother cross the room. She stooped down to look under the bed. Then she cried:

"Oh, Walter! It's alive! It isn't paper at all. It's coming out!"

"Why, so it is!" said Mr. Brown. "I wonder what—?"

Then Mrs. Brown screamed, and Mr. Brown laughed.

"Oh, it's a mouse! It's a rat! It's a whole lot of mice!" said Bunny's mother.

"Yes, it's a whole lot of mice, and they're white!" said Mr. Brown with a jolly laugh. "Hurrah! We've found the lost white mice from the boys' circus! You needn't be afraid of them!"

Mrs. Brown did not scream any more. She was not afraid of white mice. Bunny and Sue ran into the room where their mother and father were. There they saw their father picking up the white mice in his hands, and petting them. The mice seemed to like it.

"Oh, where did you find them?" cried Bunny.

"Under our bed," his mother said.

"Oh, how glad Sam will be!" said Sue. "Now we can have the circus all right."

And so the white mice were found. They had gotten out of their cage in the tent, and had, somehow or other, found their way to the farmhouse. There they had hid themselves away, until that night when they came out into Mr. Brown's room.

"Well, I'm glad they are found," said Mrs. Brown. "Give them something to eat, and put them in a box until morning."

This Mr. Brown did, after Bunny and Sue had held in their hands the queer pets, which had such funny pink eyes.

"I want to see them do some tricks," said Sue.

"Sam can hitch them to a little cart and drive them," said Bunny. "He told me so."

The mice were put safely away ready for the circus the next day, and soon the house was quiet, with everyone asleep.

The sun was brightly shining. There was

just enough wind to make it cool, and the weather was perfectly fine for the circus. Bunny, Sue, Bunker and Ben were up early that morning, for there was still much to do.

Sam, the boy who owned the white mice, came over to ask if his pets had been found. And when told that they were safe in a box down in the cellar, he was very happy indeed.

"I must put them back in their cage, and let them practise a few of their tricks," he said. "They may have forgotten some as they have been away from me so long."

Bunny and Sue had to get their things ready. They were to have a little place in the big tent to dress and get ready for their act. They were the smallest folks in the circus, and everyone was anxious to see what they would do.

On the big, as well as on the little, tent the boys had fastened flags. Some were the regular stars and stripes of our own country, and other flags were just pieces of bright-colored cloth that the boys' mothers had given them. But the tents looked very pretty in the bright

and sparkling sunshine, with the gay banners fluttering.

Just as in a real circus, the people who came were to go first into the animal tent, and from there on into the one with the seats, where they would watch the performance.

Soon after dinner the farmers and their wives, with such of their children who were not taking part in the show, began to come.

"Right this way to see the wild animals!" called Ben Hall, who was making believe he was a lion tamer. "This way for the wild animals! Come one! Come all!"

The people crowded into the small tent. All around the sides were wooden boxes, with wooden slats. These were the "cages."

"Now watch the trained white mice!" cried Ben. "The big circus is about to begin!"

"Over this way! Over this way!" cried Sam, as he stood on a box with his trained white mice in their cage in front of him. "Right this way to see the wonderful trained white mice, which escaped from their cage and were caught by brave Mr. Brown and his wife!"

Everyone clapped and laughed at that.

Then Sam made his pink-eyed pets do many tricks. They ran up his arms to his shoulders, and sat on his head. Some of them jumped over sticks, and others through paper-covered hoops, like the horse-back riders in a real circus. One big white mouse climbed a ladder, and two others drew a little wagon, in which a third mouse sat, pretending to hold the reins. One big white mouse fired a toy cannon, that shot a paper cap.

Then Sam made his mice all stand up in a line, and make a bow to the people.

"That ends the white mice act!" cried Sam. "We will now show you a wild lion. But please don't anybody be scared, for the lion can only eat bread and jam, and he won't hurt you."

"What a funny lion—to eat bread and jam," laughed Sue.

"Hush!" exclaimed Bunny. "He's going to take the blanket off the cage."

Everyone looked to see what sort of wild lion there was in the circus.

CHAPTER XXII

BUNNY'S BRAVE ACT

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, as well as boys and girls," began Ben Hall, who was a sort of ring-master, in the play-circus, "I am about to show you that this lion does really eat bread and jam, and that he is a very kind and gentle lion indeed, though he can roar. Roar for the people!" cried Ben, shaking the horse blanket that was hung in front of the "lion's cage."

The next second there came such a real "roar," that some of the smallest children screamed.

"Don't be afraid!" cried Ben. "He won't hurt you. I will now raise the curtain, and you can see the lion."

Slowly he pulled aside the blanket. And then everyone laughed—that is they did after a few seconds. For at first it did look like a real lion in the box.

He had a real tail, and a big, shaggy mane, and his mouth was wide open, showing his red tongue and his white, sharp teeth. But when you looked a second time you saw that it was only the skin of a lion, which had been made into a rug for the parlor. And it was Tom White, one of the boys with whom Bunny played, who was pretending to be a lion, with the skin rug pulled over him, and the stuffed head over his head.

Underneath the open mouth of the lion peered out Tom's smiling face, and as he looked through the wooden slats of the cage Ben put in a piece of bread and jam, which Tom ate as he knelt there on his hands and knees.

"See! I told you this was a kind and gentle lion, and would eat bread and jam," announced Ben. "I will now have him roar for you again, ladies and gentlemen. Roar, lion, roar!"

But instead of roaring, Tom, for a joke, went:

"Meaou! Meaou! Meaou!" just like a pussy cat.

Of course everyone laughed at that. The idea of a big, savage lion meaouing like a kitten! Tom had to laugh and then he couldn't pucker up his lips to meaou any more.

"Ladies and gentlemen, as well as boys and girls," went on Ben. "We will now pass to the next cage. This is a real wild animal. He has sharp teeth, so do not go too close to his cage. He is the wild chicken-eater of the woods!"

"Oh, I wonder what that can be?" whispered Sue.

"We'll see in a minute," Bunny answered. The two children, as well as the other boys who were to take part in the show in the big tent later on, were now following the crowd around to see the animals.

"Behold the wild chicken-eater of the woods!" cried Ben, as he pulled aside a blanket from another wooden box-cage.

This time there was a sort of snarl and bark. It was so real that everyone knew this was a real animal, and not a boy dressed up in a skin or fur rug. Some of the little children tried to run out of the tent.

"Don't be afraid!" called Ben. "He can't get loose. There he is!"

He pulled the blanket aside and there everyone saw a small reddish animal, as big as a dog, with a large, bushy tail, a sharp pointed nose, and very bright eyes.

"What is it?" asked Sue. "Oh! what is it?"

"It's a fox," answered her brother. "I once saw one in the real circus where grandpa found his horses the Gypsies took."

"Yes, it is a fox," said Ben. "And a fox just loves to eat chickens and live in the woods."

"Where did you get him," Bunny asked.

"Oh, one of the boys caught him in a trap, and saved him for the circus. He is going to tame him, but the fox is quite wild yet."

And indeed the fox was. For he jumped about, and tried to bite and scratch his way out of the cage. But the wooden bars were too strong for him.

The people who had come to the circus gotten up by the big boys, stood for some time looking at the fox, which was a real wild animal. Some of the farmers, though they

had lived in the country all their lives, had never seen a fox before.

"Now, if you will come down this way!" said Ben, as he started toward a place in the tent that had been curtained off, "I will show you our trained bear."

"Oh, is it real?" asked Sue.

"You'll see," said Ben, who seemed to know how to talk and act, just like a real ring-master in the circus.

Ben stood in front of the little corner of the tent, that was curtained off, so no one could see what was behind it.

"Are you all ready in there?" Ben called, loudly.

"Yes, yes, all ready!" was the quick answer. And the voice did not sound like that of any of the boys from the nearby farms.

"Oh, I didn't know a bear could talk," cried Sue, and everyone laughed, for the tent was very still and quiet just then, and Sue's voice was heard all over.

"That wasn't the bear talking," said Ben. "It was his trainer. The man who makes the bear do tricks you know."

"Oh, is it a trick bear?" Sue asked.

"Yes," answered Ben.

"A real truly one?" Bunny wanted to know.

"You'll see in a minute," Ben told her. "All ready now, Signore Allegretti! We are going to have you do some tricks with your trained bear!"

With that Ben pulled aside the curtain, and there stood a real, live, truly, big brown bear, and with him was a man wearing a red cap. The man had hold of a chain that was fastened to a leather muzzle on the bear's nose.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" cried the children.

"Why, he's real!" gasped Sue.

"Of course he's real!" laughed Ben.

"He's just like the bear the man had out in front of grandpa's house last week, doing tricks," said Bunny.

A man had gone past Grandpa Brown's house with a trained bear, and he had stopped to make the big, shaggy animal do some tricks. Bunny and Sue had given the man pennies, and Grandma Brown gave him something to eat. The man gave part of his bread and cake to the bear.

"This is the same man," said Ben. "When I saw him, I thought he and his bear would be just the thing for our circus. So I asked him to come back to-day and give us a little show on his own account. And here he is. He came last night and stayed in the barn so no one would see him until it was time for the circus. I wanted him for a surprise."

"Well, he is a surprise," said Bunny. "I didn't think it was a *real* bear."

"Let's see him do some tricks!" called a boy.

"All right. He do tricks for you," promised the man with the red cap. "Come, Alonzo. Make fun for the children. Show dem how you laugh!"

The bear, who was named Alonzo, opened his mouth very wide, and made some funny noises. I suppose that was as near to laughing as a bear could come.

"Now turn a somersault!" cried the bear's trainer, and the big, shaggy creature did—a slow, easy somersault. Then he did other tricks, such as marching like a soldier, with a stick for a gun, and he pretended to kiss his

THERE STOOD A REAL, LIVE, TRULY, BIG BROWN BEAR

Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue Playing Circus. *Page* 211.

master. Then the bear danced—at least his master called it dancing, though of course a big, heavy bear can not dance very fast.

"Now climb a pole!" cried the bear's master. "Climb a pole for the little children, and they will give us pennies to buy buns."

There was a big pole in the middle of the animal tent, and the bear trainer led the animal toward it.

"I make him climb dis!" he said.

"Is the pole strong enough to hold him?" asked Grandpa Brown. "The bear is pretty heavy, I think."

"Oh, dat pole hold him! I make Alonzo climb very easy," the Italian bear-trainer said. "Up you go, Alonzo!"

The bear stuck his long sharp claws in the pole. It was part of a tree trunk, for the regular tent pole had been broken when the tent was carried away in the flood.

Up and up went the bear, until he was half way to the top. The children looked on with delight and even the old folks said it was a good trick.

And then, all of a sudden, something hap-

pened. The big centre pole, half way up which was the bear, began to tip over. Some of the ropes that held it began to slip, because they were not tied tightly enough to hold the pole and the bear too.

"Look out!" called Daddy Brown. "The tent is going to fall! Run out everybody!"

"They haven't time!" said Grandpa Brown. "The tent will come down on our heads."

Bunny Brown stood right beside one of the ropes that held up the pole. Bunny saw the rope slipping, and he knew enough about ropes and sails to be sure that if the rope could be held the pole would not fall.

"I've got to hold that rope!" thought Bunny. Then, like the brave little fellow he was, he reached forward, and grasped the rope with both hands. He knew he could not hold it from slipping that way, however, so he wound the rope around his waist as he had seen his father's sailors do when pulling in a heavy boat. With the rope around his waist, brave Bunny found himself being pulled forward as the pole swayed over more and more, with the bear on it.

CHAPTER XXIII

BEN DOES A TRICK

"LOOK out!"

"Run, everybody!"

"Somebody help that little boy hold up the pole! He's doing it all alone!"

"Oh, Bunny! Bunny Brown! You'll be hurt!"

It was Bunny's mother who called this last. It was some of the farmers in the circus tent who had shouted before that, not seeming to know what to do. Daddy Brown and grandpa were hurrying from the other side of the tent to help Bunny hold the rope.

The pole was slowly falling, the tent seemed as if it would come down, and the Italian was calling to his bear. As for the bear, he seemed to think that he ought to climb higher up on the pole. He did not seem to mind the fall he was going to get.

Bunny Brown, small as he was, knew what he was doing. He had seen that the rope, which help up the pole, ran around a little wooden wheel, called a pulley. If he could stop the rope from running all the way through the pulley, the pole would not fall down, and the tent would stay up.

"And if I keep the rope tight around my waist, the end of it can't get over the pulley wheel," thought Bunny. He had often seen sailors do this with his father's boats, when they slid down the steep beach into the ocean.

And then, all of a sudden, Bunny found himself jerked from his feet. He struck against the bottom of the tent pole, and his side hurt him a little, but he still held to the rope about his waist.

"The pole has stopped falling! The pole has stopped falling!" some one cried.

"Yes, and Bunny stopped it!" said Sue. "Oh, Bunny, are you hurted?"

Bunny's breath was so nearly squeezed out of him that he could not answer for a moment. But his mother had reached him now. So had Daddy Brown, his grandpa and some

other men. In another moment the rope that held up the big pole was unwound from Bunny's waist and made fast to a peg in the ground.

"Now the pole can't fall!" said Grandpa Brown. "We're safe now!"

"Is—is the tent all right?" asked Bunny, as his father picked him up in his arms.

"Yes, brave little boy. The tent is all right! You stopped it from falling on the people's heads."

"And the bear—is the bear all right?" asked Bunny. From where his father held him Bunny could not see the shaggy creature.

"Yes, the bear is all right," answered Mr. Brown. "He is coming down the pole now."

"That bear is too big and heavy to climb the tent pole," said Grandpa Brown. "He is too fat. But it's lucky Bunny grabbed that rope."

"I—I saw it slipping," said Bunny, "and I —I just grabbed it!"

The bear came to the ground, and made a low bow, as his master had taught him to do. The tent pole was now made tight and fast,

and the circus could go on again. Some of the ladies, with their little boys and girls, who had run out of the tent when they thought it was going to fall, now came back again.

"The show in the animal tent is now over," said Ben Hall. "We invite you, one and all, into the next tent where we will do some real circus tricks."

"And there's preserved seats for grandpa and grandma, and daddy and mother!" called out Sue, so clearly that everyone heard her. "The preserved seats have carpet on," said Sue.

"Reserved seats, Sue, not preserved," said Bunny in a shrill whisper, and everyone who heard him laughed.

Into the big tent, with its rows of seats around the elevated stage and sawdust ring the people walked. They were still laughing at the funny sights they had seen, the lion, made from a parlor rug, with a boy inside it. And they were talking about Bunny's brave act, in stopping the pole of the tent from falling down.

"You and Sue go and get ready for what

you are to do," whispered Bunker Blue to the two children. "I'll tell you when it's your turn to come out on the stage."

"All right," answered Bunny. "Come on, Sue. Now's the time for our secret."

He and Sue went into a little dressing room that had been made especially for them. It was a part of the big tent, curtained off with blankets.

In this little room Bunny and Sue, earlier in the day, had taken the things they needed to do their "trick." You will soon learn what it was they had kept secret so long.

It took some little time for all the people to take their places in the "preserved" seats, as Sue called them. Daddy Brown and his wife, and grandpa and grandma were given places well down in front, where they could see all that went on.

"The first act!" cried Ben Hall, "will be some fancy riding on a horse, by Ted Kennedy! Come on, Ted!" he called.

"Oh, Ben's dressed up like a real clown!" called Bunny to Sue, as they looked out between their blanket curtains, and saw what

was going on. Ben had made himself a clown suit out of some calico. With a pointed cap on his head, and his face all streaked with red and white chalk, he looked just like a real clown in a real circus. Ben and some of the others had "dressed up," while the people were taking their seats in the big tent.

"Oh, look, Bunny!" cried Sue. "It's a real horse Ted is riding!"

And so it was. When Ben called for the first act, in came Ted riding on the back of one of his father's farm horses. Ted wore an old bathing suit, on which he had sewed some pieces of colored rags, and some small sleigh bells, that jingled when he danced about on the back of the horse. For the horse was such a slow one, with such a broad back, that there was no danger of Ted's falling off.

Around and around the sawdust ring rode Ted. Now he would stand on his hands, and again on his feet. Then he would sit down and ride backwards. Finally, when the horse was going a little faster Ted jumped off, jumped on again, and then turned a somersault in the air.

"Wasn't that great, Bunny?" cried Sue, who was watching.

"It sure was. But hurry up, or we'll be late."

The people clapped and laughed as Ted rode out of the ring after his act. Then came more of the circus tricks. Two of the bigger boys pretended they were an elephant. One was the hind legs and tail and the other boy was the front legs and trunk. The boys were covered with a suit of dark cloth, almost the color of an elephant, and when they walked around the ring it was very funny. Then a little boy was given a ride on the "elephant's back." He liked it very much.

Two other boys pretended they were horses, with long bunches of grass for tails. Each one took a smaller boy on his back, and then these "boy horses" raced around the sawdust ring.

Two of the girls were dressed up like real circus ladies, one in a pink, and the other in a blue dress, made from mosquito netting. They sat on sawhorses, which Bunker Blue got from the village carpenter shop. And though the sawhorses could not run, or gal-

lop, or even trot, the girls pretended they could, and they had such a funny make-believe race that everyone laughed. The girls even jumped through paper hoops, just as the real riders do in a circus.

Then there was a wheelbarrow race between two boys, each of whom had to push another boy around the tent. All went well until one of the clowns put a pail of water in front of one of the wheelbarrows. Over this pail the boy stumbled, and he and the one he was wheeling got all wet.

But it was only in fun, and no one minded. There were several boys who did fancy tricks on the trapeze bars. They hung by their arms and legs, and "turned themselves inside out," as Bunny called it.

Other boys did some high and broad jumping, while Bunker Blue pretended he was the big strong giant man, who could lift heavy weights. But the weights were only empty pasteboard boxes, painted black to look like iron. Bunker pretended it was very hard to lift them, but of course it was easy, for they were very light.

One boy, Tommie Lutken, did a very good trick though. He walked on a tight rope stretched from one end of the tent to the other. This was a real trick, and Tommie had practised nearly two weeks before he could do it. He walked back and forth without falling. But when the people clapped, and wanted him to do it again, Tommie did not do so well. He slipped and fell, but he did not get hurt.

"Now, Bunny and Sue, it's your turn!" called Ben to them, when he came out of the ring, after having done some funny clown tricks. "Are you all ready?"

"All ready!" answered Bunny. "Come on, Sue."

Out of their dressing room the children came, and when the people saw them they laughed and clapped their hands. For Bunny was dressed like a scarecrow out of a cornfield, with a suit of such ragged and patched clothes on that it is a wonder they did not fall off him. He had a black mask, cut out of cloth, over his face, and he held his arms and legs stiff, just as the wooden and straw scarecrow does in the cornfield.

And Sue! You'd never guess how she was dressed.

She was a Jack o'lantern. She and Bunny had scooped the inside out of a big yellow pumpkin, and had made it thin and hollow. Then they had cut a hole in the bottom, made eyes, a nose and mouth, and Sue put the pumpkin over her head.

From her shoulders to her feet Sue was covered with an old sheet, and as she walked along it looked just as if a real, Hallowe'en Jack-o'-lantern had come to life.

Out on to the wooden platform of the circus tent went Bunny, the scarecrow boy, and Sue, the Jack-o'-lantern girl. They made little bows to each other, and then to the audience, and then they did a funny dance, while Bunker Blue played on his mouth organ.

"Say, isn't that just fine of our children?" whispered Mother Brown.

"It certainly is," said Daddy.

Up and down the platform danced Bunny and Sue. They were the smallest ones in the circus, and everyone said they were just "too cute for anything."

OUT CAME BUNNY, THE SCARECROW BOY, AND SUE, THE JACK-O'-LANTERN GIRL. *Page* 224.

Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue Playing Circus.

There were many more tricks done by the boys in the tent, and the circus was a great success. Ben and the other clowns made lots of fun. They threw water on one another, beat each other with cloth clubs, stuffed with sawdust, which didn't hurt any more than a feather.

"And now I will do my great jumping trick!" called Ben, "and then the show will be over. I am going to jump over fourteen elephants and ten camels."

At the end of the tent was a long board, which sprang up and down like a teeter-tauter. It was called a spring-board, and some of the boys had made their jumps from it, turning somersaults in the air, and falling down in a pile of soft hay.

Ben asked some of the boys to stand in a line at the end of the spring board.

"I'll just pretend these boys are elephants and camels," said Ben, "as it's hard to get real camels and elephants this summer. But I will now make my big jump."

Ben went to the far end of the spring board. He gave a run down it, and then

jumped off the springy end. Up in the air he went, and, as he shot forward, over the heads of the boys standing in a line, Ben turned first one, then two, and then three somersaults in the air.

"Oh, look at that!"

"Say, that's great!"

"How did he do it?"

"He must be a regular circus performer!"

"Do it again! Do it again!"

Everyone was shouting at once, it seemed. Ben landed on a pile of soft hay. He stood up, made a low bow, and kissed his hand to the audience, as performers do in the circus.

A strange man, who had come into the circus a little while before, started toward Ben Hall. Ben stood there bowing and smiling until he saw this man.

"Come here a minute, Ben. I want to talk to you," said the man.

But Ben, after one look at the stranger, gave a jump, crawled under the tent and ran away, all dressed as he was in the clown suit.

"Why—why! What did he do that for?" asked Bunny Brown, very much surprised.

CHAPTER XXIV

BEN'S SECRET

EVERYONE was looking at the place where Ben Hall had slid out under the edge of the tent and run away. Why he had done it no one knew.

Then all eyes were turned toward the strange man who had come into the tent just in time to see Ben's big jump, and his three somersaults. The man was a stranger. No one seemed to know him.

This man stood for a moment, also looking at the place where Ben had slipped under the tent. Then he cried out:

"Well, he's got away again! I must catch him!"

Then the man ran out of the tent.

"What is it all about?" asked Mother Brown. "Is this a part of the circus, Bunny?"

But Bunny did not know; neither did his

sister Sue. They were as much surprised as anyone at Ben's strange act. And they did not know who the man was, at the sight of whom Ben had seemed so frightened.

"I'll see what it's about," said Grandpa Brown.

He hurried out of the tent, but soon came back again.

"Ben isn't in sight," Grandpa Brown said, "and that queer man is running across the fields."

"Is he chasing after Ben?" asked Bunny.

"Well, he may be. But if I can't see Ben, I don't see how the man can, either. I don't know what it all means."

"Maybe the man was a Gypsy," said Sue, "and he wants to catch Ben, same as the Gypsies took grandpa's horses."

"Gypsies don't take boys and girls," said Mrs. Brown. "Besides, that man didn't look like a Gypsy. There is something queer about it all."

"I always said that boy, Ben, was queer," asserted Grandpa Brown. "He has acted queerly from the time he came here so hun-

gry. But he was a good boy, and he worked well, I'll say that for him. I hope he isn't in trouble."

"Will he—will he come back?" Sue wanted to know.

"I don't know, my dear," answered her grandfather. "I hope so."

"I hope so, too!" declared Sue. "I like Ben."

"He ran as soon as he saw that man," observed Bunker Blue.

"Did he ever tell you anything about himself?" asked Mr. Brown. "You were with Ben most of the time, Bunker."

"No, sir, he never told me anything about himself. But he seemed to know a lot about circuses. I asked him if he was ever with one, but he would never tell me."

"Well, I don't know that we can do anything," said grandpa. "If Ben comes back we'll treat him right, and if he is in trouble we will help him. But, since he is gone, there is no use trying to find him."

The circus was over. The boys who had brought their pets to the show took them home

again. It was now late afternoon, and Grandpa Brown said the boys could leave the tents up until next day, as there was no sign of a storm.

"You can take them down then," he said to Bunker Blue. "My tent we'll store away in the barn, until Bunny and Sue want to give another circus. The big fair tent can also be taken down to-morrow and put away. But everyone is too tired to do all that work to-night."

That evening, in grandpa's farmhouse, after supper, nothing was talked of but the circus, and what had happened at it. Everyone said it was the best children's circus they had ever seen.

"But poor Ben!" exclaimed Bunny. "I wonder where he is?"

"Did he have his supper?" asked Sue.

No one knew, for Ben had not come back. It was dark now. The cows and horses had been fed. The chickens had had their supper, and gone to roost long ago. Bunny, Sue and all the others had had a good meal. But Ben was not around. Everyone felt sad.

"I wonder why he ran away," pondered Bunker Blue, over and over again. "I wonder why he ran away, as soon as he saw that man."

No one knew.

Early the next morning Bunny Brown and his sister Sue arose and came down stairs to breakfast.

"Did Ben come back?" was the first question they asked.

"No," said Grandma Brown. "He didn't come back."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Sue.

"It's too bad!" said Bunny. Then he crooked and wiggled one of his fat little fingers at Sue. She knew what that meant. It meant Bunny had something to whisper to her.

"What is it?" she asked, when grandma had gone out into the kitchen to get some more bread and butter.

"Hush! Don't tell anyone," whispered Bunny. "But we'll go and look for him and bring him back."

"Bring who back?"

"Ben Hall. We'll go look for him, Sue."

"But we don't know where to find him."

"We'll take Splash," announced Bunny. "Splash likes Ben, and our dog will find him. We'll go right after breakfast."

And as soon as they had brushed their teeth, which they did after each meal, Bunny Brown and his sister Sue started out to find Ben Hall, who had run away from the circus the day before.

Bunny and Sue did not want to go very far away from grandpa's house. They, themselves, had been lost a number of times, and they did not want this to happen again. But they thought there would be no harm in just walking across the meadow where Ben had last been seen. From the meadow grandpa's house was in plain sight, and if Bunny and Sue did not stray into the wood, which was at the further side of the meadow, they could not lose their way.

"I hope we can find Ben," said Sue.

"So do I," echoed Bunny. "Come on Splash, find Ben!"

The big dog barked and ran on ahead.

Bunker Blue, and some of the boys who had

helped get up the circus, were now taking down the big tent. It was to be folded up, put on a wagon, and taken to the town hall where it was kept when not in use.

"I'm going to be a circus man when I grow up," said Bunny, as he looked back, and saw the white tent fluttering to the ground, as the ropes holding it up were loosened.

"I'm not," said Sue. "I—I'd be afraid of the wild animals. I'm just going to ride in an automobile when I get big."

"You can ride in mine," offered Bunny. "I'm going to have an automobile, even if I am a circus man."

Over the meadow went the two children and Splash their dog, looking for Ben Hall. But they did not see him, nor did they see the strange man who had run after him out of the tent. Bunny and Sue went almost to the patch of woodland. Then they turned back, for they did not want to get lost.

"I guess we can't find him," said Bunny sadly.

"No," agreed Sue. "Let's go back."

When the children reached grandpa's

house again, the big tent was down, and Bunker and the other boys were gone. They were taking the tent back. The smaller tent—the one Grandpa Brown had loaned—was still up.

"Let's go in it and rest," said Bunny. "We can make believe we are camping out."

"All right," agreed Sue.

Into the tent they went. All the wooden boxes, that had been used as cages for the make-believe wild animals, had been taken out. There was only some straw piled up in one corner.

"Watch me jump!" cried Bunny. He gave a run and landed on something in the pile of soft straw. Something in the straw grunted and yelled. Then some one sat up. Bunny Brown rolled over and over out of the way.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Sue. "What is it?"

But she did not need to ask twice. She saw a big boy, dressed in a funny clown's suit, standing up in the straw. Bunny was now sitting up, and he, too, was looking at the clown.

"Why—why," said Sue, "It's Ben! It's our Ben!"

"So it is!" cried Bunny.

"Yes," answered Ben, rubbing his eyes, for he had been asleep in the straw when Bunny jumped on him. "Yes, I've come back. I stayed in the field, under a haystack all night, but I couldn't stand it any longer. I had to come back."

"What'd you run away for?" asked Bunny.

"Because I was afraid he'd catch me," Ben answered.

"Do you mean that—that man," whispered Bunny.

"Yes."

"He isn't here," said Sue. "Did you stay in this tent all the while, Ben?"

"No, Sue. I ran across the field when I saw that man looking at me, after I made my big jump. I ran over to the woods and hid. Then, when it got dark, I crept back and hid under the hay stack. A little while ago, when I saw Bunker and the other boys drive away with the big tent, I came back here. I'm awfully hungry!"

"We'll get you something to eat," said Sue. "Won't we, Bunny?"

"Sure we will. But come on up to the house, Ben. That man isn't there, and we won't let him hurt you. What's it all about, anyhow?"

"I guess I'll have to tell your folks my secret," Ben answered.

"Oh, have you a secret, too?" asked Sue, clapping her hands. "How nice!"

"No, it isn't very nice," said Ben. "But I guess I will go and ask your grandmother for something to eat. I'm terribly hungry!"

Holding the hands of Bunny Brown and his sister Sue, Ben, the strange boy, who had been so queerly found under the straw in the tent, walked toward grandpa's house.

"Well land sakes! Where'd you come from?" asked Grandma Brown, as she saw him. "And such a looking sight! You look as if you'd slept in a barn all night!"

"I did—almost," said Ben, smiling.

"Well, come in and get that clown suit off you," said Mrs. Brown. "Then tell us all about it. What made you run away?"

"I was afraid that man would get me," said Ben.

"Why should he want to get you?" asked Daddy Brown.

"Because I ran away from his circus where I used to do tricks," Ben answered. "That's my secret. I used to be a regular circus performer, but I couldn't stand it any longer, and I ran away. I didn't want you to know it, so I didn't tell you. But that man, who came into the tent when I was doing the same jump I used to do in the regular circus—that man knew me. I thought he had come to take me back, and I didn't want to go. So I ran away."

"You poor boy!" said Grandma Brown.

There came a knock on the door, and when Mrs. Brown opened it there stood the same man from whom Ben had run away the day before.

"Oh, you're back again I see!" said the man.

Ben dropped his knife and fork on his plate, and looked around for a place to hide. Everyone was silent, waiting for what would happen next.

CHAPTER XXV

BACK HOME AGAIN

"Now don't be afraid, Ben," said the man. "I'm not going to hurt you."

"Are you—are you going to make me go back to the circus?" Ben asked slowly.

"Not unless you want to go, though we want you back with us very much, for we have missed you," the man replied.

"I'll not go back to be beaten the way I was!" cried Ben. "I can't stand that. That's why I ran away."

"You can just stay with us; can't he Mother?" pleaded Sue. "He can work on grandpa's farm with Bunker Blue."

"What does all this mean?" asked Grandpa Brown of the strange man who had knocked at the door. "Are you after Ben?"

"Yes, sir, I am after Ben," was the answer, and the man smiled. "I have been looking for

him for a long time, and I am glad I have found him. I will take him back with me if he will come, and I will make him a promise that he will no more be whipped. I never knew anything about that until after he had run away from my circus."

"Did you really do that, Ben?" asked Bunny. "Run away?"

"Yes. That was where I came from that night I begged a meal here—a circus. But I'll go back, for I like being in a circus, if I'm not beaten."

"Tell us all about it," said grandpa.

"I will," answered the man. "My name is James Hooper. I own a small circus, with some other men, and we travel about the country, giving performances in small towns and cities. This boy, Ben Hall, has been in our show ever since he was a baby. His father and mother were both circus people, but they died last year, and Ben, who had learned to do many tricks, and who knew something about animals, was such a bright chap that I kept him with us. I was going to make a circus performer of him."

"And I wanted very much to be one—a clown," said Ben. "But the head clown was so mean to me, and whipped me so much, that I made up my mind to run away, and I did."

"I don't know that I blame you," said Mr. Hooper. "I never knew that you had such a hard time. I supposed you ran away just for fun, and I tried to find you. I asked about you in all the places where we stopped, but no one had seen you."

"I have been here ever since I left your show," explained Ben. "I like it here, but I like the circus better. How did you find me?"

"Well, our circus is showing in a town about three miles from here," said Mr. Hooper. "Over there, in that town, I heard about a little circus some boys and girls were getting up here, and—"

"Bunny and I got up the circus first," said Sue, "and then the big boys made one, but we acted in it."

"I see!" laughed Mr. Hooper. "Well, I heard about your circus over here, so I came to ask if any of you had seen Ben. I walked into the tent, and there I saw him doing the

jump and somersaults he used to do in our tent. I knew him right away, but before I could speak to him he ran away.

"I ran after him, hoping I could tell him how much we wanted him back, but I could not catch up to him. So I went back to my circus, and made up my mind I'd come back here again to-day. I'm glad I did, for now I've found you, Ben."

Ben told Mr. Hooper, just as he had told Bunny and Sue, about sleeping all night out in the field, under a pile of hay, and then of creeping back to sleep in the tent.

"Well, do you want to come back with me, or stay here on the farm?" asked Mr. Hooper. "I'll promise that you'll be well treated, Ben, and the head clown, who was so mean to you, isn't with us any more. You won't be whipped again, and you'll have a chance to become a head clown yourself."

"Then I'll come back with you," said the circus boy. "I'm very much obliged to you, for all you've done for me," he said to Grandpa Brown and Grandma Brown, "and I hope you won't be mad at me if I go away."

"Not if you think it best to go," said grandpa. "You have been a good boy while here, and you have more than earned your board. I don't like to lose you, but if you want to be a clown, the circus is the best place for you."

"All his folks were circus people," said Mr. Hooper. "And when that's the case the young folks nearly always stay in the same business. Ben will make a good clown when he grows up, and he will be a good jumper, too."

"I'm going to be a circus man," said Bunny. "Can I be in your show, Mr. Hooper?"

"Well, we'll see about that when you get a little older. But you and your sister can come and see our circus, any time you wish, for nothing. I watched you two do your scarecrow and pumpkin dance, and you did it very well."

Bunny Brown and his sister Sue were pleased to hear this.

"Yes, it was a pretty good circus for young folks to get up all by themselves," said Grandpa Brown. But how soon do you have to take Ben away with you, Mr. Hooper?"

"As soon as I can, Mr. Brown. Our show

is going to move on to-night, and I'd like to have Ben back in his old place if you can let him go."

"Oh, yes," said Grandpa Brown. "He can go. I hope you'll be happy, Ben."

"I'll look well after him, and he shall have no more trouble," said Mr. Hooper. Then Ben told what a hard time he had after he ran away from the circus. He had to sleep in old barns, and under hay-stacks, and he had very little to eat. And when he came to grandpa's house he did not tell that he had run away from the show, for fear some one would make him go back to the bad clown who beat him.

But everything came out all right, you see, and Ben was happy once more. Of course, Bunny and Sue felt sorry to have their friend leave them, but it could not be helped.

"But we'll be going back home ourselves pretty soon," said Daddy Brown.

Bunker Blue and Ben Hall shook hands and said they hoped they would see each other again.

"And to think," said Bunker, "that you

were from a circus all the time, and never told us! But I sort of thought you were, for you knew so much about ropes, and putting up tents, making tricks and acts and pretend wild animals, and all that."

"Yes," answered Ben with a laugh, "sometimes it was pretty hard not to do some of the other tricks I had learned in the circus. I didn't want you to find out about me, but the secret came out, anyhow."

"Just like ours about the scare-crow and the pumpkin!" laughed Bunny Brown. "Wasn't ours a good secret?"

"It certainly was!" cried Mother Brown.

That night Ben Hall said good-bye to Bunny, Sue and all the others, and went back to the real circus with Mr. Hooper.

"I wonder if we'll ever see him again?" asked Bunny, a little sadly.

"Perhaps you will," said his father.

The vacation of Bunny and Sue, on grandpa's farm was at an end. In a few days they were to go back to their home, near the ocean.

"Oh, but we have had such fun here; haven't we, Bunny?" cried Sue.

"Indeed we have," he said. "Jolly good fun!"

"I wonder what we'll do next?" Sue asked.

"I don't know," answered her brother.

But, as I happen to know, I'll tell you. Bunny and Sue went on another journey, and you may read all about it in the next book in this series, which will be named: "Bunny Brown and His Sister Sue at Aunt Lu's City Home."

In that book I'll tell you all the funny things the little boy and girl saw, and did, when they were in the big city of New York. It was quite different from being on grandpa's farm in the country.

One morning, about two weeks after the play-circus had been given, and Ben Hall had gone back to the real show, to learn to be a clown, Bunker Blue brought the great big automobile up to the farmhouse.

"All aboard!" cried Bunker. "All aboard for Bellemere and Sandport Bay! Come on, Bunny and Sue!"

Into the automobile, that was like a little house on wheels, climbed Bunny and Sue.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown also got in. Bunker sat on the front seat to steer. There were good things to eat in the automobile, and the little beds were all made up, with freshly ironed sheets, so when night came, everyone would have a good sleep. Splash sat up on the front seat with Bunker.

"Good-bye! Good-bye!" called Bunny and Sue, waving their hands out of a window.

"Good-bye!" answered grandma and Grandpa Brown.

"Good-bye!" called the hired man.

"Bow-wow!" barked Splash.

"Chug-chug!" went the automobile, and, after a safe and pleasant journey, Bunny Brown and his sister Sue safely reached home, ready for new fun and fresh adventures which they had in plenty. And so we will all say good-bye to them.

THE END

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